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Ministry of Islamic Affairs,
Endowments, Da'wah and Guidance
King Fahd Qur'ān Printing Complex
General Secretariat
Academic Affairs



The Foundations of Faith

in the Light of the *Qur'ān* and the *Sunnah*

by

A Committee of Scholars

Translated by

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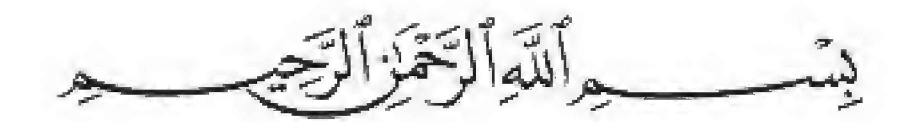
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In the Name of Allāh
the Entirely Merciful, the Especially Merciful

Translator's Notes

1- Footnotes with the inscription "Translator" at the end have been added to the original to facilitate the reading and understanding of the text.

2- The symbol (ﷻ), wherever found in this book is equivalent to the expression "The Exalted, the Sublime, etc." usually written after Almighty Allāh's name.

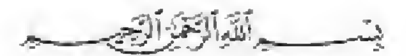
3- The normal invocations for Allāh's blessings or mercy to be on his Prophets or the Companions have been put in certain conventional symbols, such as (ﷺ)= May the peace and blessings of Allāh be on him, (عليه السلام)= May Allāh's blessings be on him, (رضي الله عنه)= May Allāh be pleased with him, (رضي الله عنها) = May Allāh be pleased with her, (رضي الله عنهم) and (رضي الله عنهما) = May Allāh be pleased with them, etc.

4- The following system of transliteration has been used in this book: *(next page) ..*

Arabic Letter or Mark	Transliterated or Transcribed as	Arabic Letter or Mark	Transliterated or Transcribed as
ء	'	ط	ṭ
ب	b	ظ	ẓ
ت	t	ع	'
ث	th	غ	gh
ج	j	ف	f
ح	ḥ	ق	q
خ	kh	ك	k
د	d	ل	l
ذ	dh	م	m
ر	r	ن	n
ز	z	ه	h
س	s	و	"w" as consonant and "ū" as vowel
ش	sh	ي	"y" as consonant and " ī "as vowel
ص	ṣ	ا	ā (long vowel)
ض	ḍ		

Short vowels = *'a'* for *fatḥah* (َ); *'i'* for *kasrah* (ِ); *'u'* for *ḍammah* (ُ).

Contents



FOREWORD

By His Excellency, Sheikh Ṣāliḥ bin 'Abd al-'Azīz bin Muḥammad Āl al-Sheikh, Minister for Islamic Affairs, Endowments, *Da'wah* and Guidance, the Supervisor-General of the Complex.

Praise be to Allāh, the Lord of all beings, who says in His Glorious Book, ﴿ ٱدْعُ إِلَىٰ سَبِيلِ رَبِّكَ بِٱلْحِكْمَةِ وَٱلْمَوْعِظَةِ ٱلْحَسَنَةِ ﴾. **Call to the way of your Lord with wisdom and fair admonition** (al-Naḥl: 125). May peace and blessings be upon the noblest of all Prophets and Messengers of Allāh, who has also said, (بلغوا عنّي ولو آية). **Convey of my message [to others], at least a single *āyah*[1].** (*Bukhārī*: 3461).

In line with the directives of the Custodian of the two Holy Mosques, King 'Abdullah bin 'Abd al-'Azīz Āl-Sa'ūd regarding the extension of whatever is good to Muslims in the four corners of the earth. This includes, primarily, giving the Book of Allāh necessary attention, facilitating its publication, translating its meaning and distributing copies of it to Muslims or whoever may develop an interest in studying it among the non-Muslims. Furthermore, to publish any other literature that is beneficial to Muslims in either their religious or worldly affairs.

The Ministry of Islamic Affairs, Endowments, *Da'wah* and Guidance, represented here by the King Fahd Qur'ān Printing

1- The word *āyah* here stands for whatever the Prophet (ﷺ) was heard saying or seen doing. This could be a portion of the Qur'ān as revealed to him by Allāh, or an explanation of it, otherwise known as the prophetic *Sunnah*. (Translator)

Complex in al-Madinah, having strongly believed in the importance of *Da'wah* (Calling to the religion of Islam) based on a sound conception and clear understanding, is hereby pleased to present the book: "THE FOUNDATIONS OF FAITH IN THE LIGHT OF THE *QUR'ĀN* AND THE *SUNNAH*", with a view to educate Muslims on issues of *Aqidah* (Muslim's Belief), which is also the basis of their faith. The Prophet (ﷺ) has said, (إنّ في الجسد مضغة إذا صلحت صلح الجسد كله) **There is a piece of flesh in the [human] body, should it be good (reformed), the whole of the body also becomes good.** (*Bukhāri*: 52).

Other series of books on *Hadīth*, *Fiqh* (Islamic Jurisprudence), Remembrance of Allāh and Supplication would also come into circulation *in sha Allāh*. We pray to Allāh, the Supreme, the Almighty, to make them all useful to the Muslims worldwide.

It is my pleasure to thank the authors, the review and drafting committees, and the translator, for their sincere efforts. I would also like to express my gratitude to the entire staff of the General Secretariat of the Complex for their great care and supervision.

I pray to Allāh (ﷻ) to protect this country, as a keeper of His religion and defender of the sound faith, under the leadership of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques and his Crown Prince, may Allāh protect them. In conclusion of our supplication, we say, "Praise be to Allāh the Lord of all beings".



Preface

Praise be to Allāh who has perfected for us the religion of Islam, completed His favour upon us, made our nation, the Muslim nation, the best of all nations and raised amongst us a Messenger of our own, who recites Allāh's words to us, purifies and teaches us both the Book and the wisdom[1]. May the peace and blessings of Allāh be upon our Prophet Muḥammad, whom Allāh has sent as a mercy to all beings, and upon his family as well as his Companions.

Mankind and *jinn*[2] are created to worship Allāh alone. This has been stated in His saying that,

﴿وَمَا خَلَقْتُ ٱلْجِنَّ وَٱلْإِنسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ﴾.

And I created not the *jinn* and mankind except that they should worship Me. (al-Dhāriyāt: 56).

Hence, *Tawḥīd* (Monotheism) and sound belief originating from the two pristine and blessed sources, the Book of Allāh and the *Sunnah* of His Messenger (ﷺ) represent the utmost degree of fulfilment regarding the worship of Allāh. This *Tawḥīd* is also the basis for the habitation of this universe, without which the alternative would be sheer disintegration, ruin and disorder. Allāh (ﷻ) says,

﴿لَوْ كَانَ فِيهِمَآ ءَالِهَةٌ إِلَّا ٱللَّهُ لَفَسَدَتَا فَسُبْحَـٰنَ ٱللَّهِ رَبِّ ٱلْعَرْشِ عَمَّا يَصِفُونَ﴾.

Had there been therein [the heavens and the earth] (other) gods besides Allāh, there would have been ruin in both. Glorified be Allāh, the Lord of the Throne [and exalted is He] above what they attribute to Him. (al-Anbiyā' : 22).

1- The Book, that is the Glorious Qur'ān, while the word wisdom here represents the traditions of the Prophet (ﷺ) or *Sunnah*. (Translator)

2- The *Jinn* are a species of beings created by Allāh from fire.

﴿ ٱللَّهُ ٱلَّذِى خَلَقَ سَبْعَ سَمَٰوَٰتٍ وَمِنَ ٱلْأَرْضِ مِثْلَهُنَّ يَتَنَزَّلُ ٱلْأَمْرُ بَيْنَهُنَّ لِتَعْلَمُوٓاْ أَنَّ ٱللَّهَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَىْءٍ قَدِيرٌ وَأَنَّ ٱللَّهَ قَدْ أَحَاطَ بِكُلِّ شَىْءٍ عِلْمًۢا ﴾.

It is Allāh who created seven heavens and of the earth the like thereof. The commandment descends between them; that you may know that Allāh is able to do all things, and that Allāh comprehends all things in [His] Knowledge. (al-Ṭalāq: 12).

There are other *ayahs* (verses) on this subject as well.

As it is not possible for human intellect to comprehend, independently, details of the Faith, Allāh has sent His Messengers and revelation to clarify such to mankind. Thus, they would be able to worship Him based on knowledge, understanding, crystal clear principles and upright fundamentals. Henceforth, Allāh's Messengers have come in succession to convey and explain this message to the people of their time. A testimony to this is found in the following Qur'ānic verses:

﴿ وَإِن مِّنْ أُمَّةٍ إِلَّا خَلَا فِيهَا نَذِيرٌ ﴾.

And there never was a nation but a warner had passed among them. (Fāṭir: 24).

﴿ ثُمَّ أَرْسَلْنَا رُسُلَنَا تَتْرَا ﴾.

Then We sent our Messengers in succession. (al-Mu'minūn: 44). i.e. one coming after another, until Allāh wound up His revelations with that which He has sent to the leader and the best of all His Prophets and Messengers, Muḥammad (ﷺ), who delivered the message, discharged the trust, counselled his followers and strove earnestly in the cause of Allāh. He also called people to the religion of Allāh, both in secret and in public, and perfectly shouldered the burdens of the divine Message. Although he was extremely harmed in this respect, he

bore all the hardships with patience, just as the Messengers of firm resolution had done before. Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ) was unrelenting in his effort to call people to the way of Allāh and lead them to His straight path, until He manifested the religion and completed His favour through him. As a result of the Prophet's *da'wah* efforts, many people embraced Islam. Moreover, never did he part with life until Allāh had used him to perfect His religion and complete His favour. Thus, He said in His Glorious Book,

﴿ٱلْيَوْمَ أَكْمَلْتُ لَكُمْ دِينَكُمْ وَأَتْمَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ نِعْمَتِى وَرَضِيتُ لَكُمُ ٱلْإِسْلَٰمَ دِينًا﴾

This day I have perfected for you your religion, completed my Favour upon you, and have approved for you Islam as religion.

(al- Mā'idah: 3).

The Prophet (ﷺ) has also explained in detail all the fundamental and non-fundamental aspects of this religion. The great scholar of the Abode of *Hijrah*[1], Mālik bin Anas testified to this by saying, "It is implausible to assume that the Prophet (ﷺ) could have taught his followers how to become purified after using the toilet, but never cared to teach them to believe in the one and only God, Allāh".

Calling people to believe in one God, (Allāh), to worship Him with sincerity, and to renounce all forms of polytheism was the way of our Prophet, just as it had been the way of all the Messengers of Allāh before him; they all agreed on this and invited people to it. *Tawḥīd* has consistently been the starting point of their *da'wah*, the essence of their message and the basis of their mission. Allāh (ﷻ) says,

1- i.e. al-Madīnah al-Nabawiyyah or the city of the Prophet (ﷺ). The word *Hijrah* means emigration. (Translator)

﴿ وَلَقَدْ بَعَثْنَا فِي كُلِّ أُمَّةٍ رَّسُولًا أَنِ ٱعْبُدُوا۟ ٱللَّهَ وَٱجْتَنِبُوا۟ ٱلطَّٰغُوتَ ۖ فَمِنْهُم مَّنْ هَدَى ٱللَّهُ وَمِنْهُم مَّنْ حَقَّتْ عَلَيْهِ ٱلضَّلَٰلَةُ ۚ فَسِيرُوا۟ فِي ٱلْأَرْضِ فَٱنظُرُوا۟ كَيْفَ كَانَ عَٰقِبَةُ ٱلْمُكَذِّبِينَ ﴾.

And certainly, We have raised in every nation a Messenger [proclaiming:] worship Allāh [alone] and shun false deities. Then of them were some whom Allāh guided, and of them were some upon whom straying became inevitably established. So travel through the land and see what the end of the deniers [of the truth] was. (al-Naḥl :36).

﴿ وَمَآ أَرْسَلْنَا مِن قَبْلِكَ مِن رَّسُولٍ إِلَّا نُوحِىٓ إِلَيْهِ أَنَّهُۥ لَآ إِلَٰهَ إِلَّآ أَنَا۠ فَٱعْبُدُونِ ﴾.

And We sent not before you any Messenger except that We revealed to him that, None has the right to be worshiped save Me, so worship Me [alone]. (al-Anbiyā' :25).

﴿ وَسْـَٔلْ مَنْ أَرْسَلْنَا مِن قَبْلِكَ مِن رُّسُلِنَآ أَجَعَلْنَا مِن دُونِ ٱلرَّحْمَٰنِ ءَالِهَةً يُعْبَدُونَ ﴾.

And ask those of Our Messengers whom We sent before you: Did We ever appoint gods to be worshipped besides the Most Merciful [Allāh]? (al-Zukhruf : 45).

﴿ شَرَعَ لَكُم مِّنَ ٱلدِّينِ مَا وَصَّىٰ بِهِۦ نُوحًا وَٱلَّذِىٓ أَوْحَيْنَآ إِلَيْكَ وَمَا وَصَّيْنَا بِهِۦٓ إِبْرَٰهِيمَ وَمُوسَىٰ وَعِيسَىٰٓ ۖ أَنْ أَقِيمُوا۟ ٱلدِّينَ وَلَا تَتَفَرَّقُوا۟ فِيهِ ﴾.

He has ordained for you of religion what He enjoined upon Nuḥ, and that which We have revealed to you [Muḥammad], and what We enjoined upon Ibrahīm, Mūsā and 'Isā, that you should establish the religion and be not divided therein. (al-Shūra: 13).

According to the two most authentic collections of the *ḥadīth* (Prophetic tradition), Abu Hurairah (ﷺ) narrated that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said,

(الأنبياء إخوة لعلاّت، أمّهاتهم شتّى ودينهم واحد).

The Prophets [of Allāh] are half siblings; brothers of different maternal parenthood, but their religion is one. (*Bukhāri*: 3443; *Muslim*: 2365). The religion, and, of course, the creed of the Prophets is thus, one and the same, even though there is variation in details of the law sent to each of them. Allāh (ﷻ) has said,

﴿لِكُلٍّ جَعَلْنَا مِنكُمْ شِرْعَةً وَمِنْهَاجًا﴾.

To each of you We prescribed a law and a method. (al- Mā'idah: 48).

Every Muslim or *Mu'min*[1] therefore, ought to understand clearly, that issues of creed must neither be subjected to human reasoning, nor be decided on the basis of "give and take" argument. Rather, it is incumbent upon every Muslim in any part of the world to adhere to the creed held by Allāh's Messengers and Prophets, and believe in those principles they all believed in and invited people to, without doubt or hesitation.

﴿ءَامَنَ ٱلرَّسُولُ بِمَآ أُنزِلَ إِلَيْهِ مِن رَّبِّهِۦ وَٱلْمُؤْمِنُونَ ۚ كُلٌّ ءَامَنَ بِٱللَّهِ وَمَلَٰٓئِكَتِهِۦ وَكُتُبِهِۦ وَرُسُلِهِۦ لَا نُفَرِّقُ بَيْنَ أَحَدٍ مِّن رُّسُلِهِۦ ۚ وَقَالُوا۟ سَمِعْنَا وَأَطَعْنَا ۖ غُفْرَانَكَ رَبَّنَا وَإِلَيْكَ ٱلْمَصِيرُ﴾.

The Messenger has believed in what was revealed to him from his Lord, and (so have) the believers. All of them did believe in Allāh, His angels, His Books and His Messengers [saying], We make no distinction between any of His Messengers. And they say, We hear and we obey. [We seek] Your Forgiveness, our Lord, and to you is the [ultimate] return. (al-Baqarah: 285).

1- The word *Mu'min* literally means a believer, but whenever used alongside the word Muslim it denotes a level of faith higher than that of an ordinary Muslim. (Translator)

Such is the behaviour of the believers and their way of life-belief, submission, compliance and acceptance. Any believing Muslim with these qualities will be safe and secure and shall live in peace, with tranquillity and a purified mind. He will also be totally free from contradiction, confusion, scepticism, illusion, irresolution and indecision, all of which are commonly the characteristics of those who have gone astray as a result of their false belief.

Holding a sound belief with firmly established fundamentals, flawless bases and strong rules, is the only time-tested factor that can bring about happiness, dignity and prosperity for mankind, both in this life and in the life to come. This belief has clearly defined landmarks, most accurate proofs and faultless evidence. It is, in addition, absolutely compatible with human nature, sound minds and unimpaired hearts.

The entire Muslim world is, therefore, in dire need of getting familiar with this unadulterated belief, being the axis around which their welfare revolves, and the permanent place of their salvation.

In this book, even as concise as it is, the readers will find the indispensable fundamentals of the Islamic creed, its most important foundations and most prominent principles and features, coupled with proofs and many pieces of evidence. Thus, it is a book consisting of **the foundations of Faith in the light of the Qur'ān and the *Sunnah*.** Such important principles handed down to us by the Messengers, are so evident that any reasonable person, whether young or old, could easily assimilate them in a very short time. Success is, however, solely in the Hands of Allāh.

In this connection, we thank, profusely, the authors: Dr. Ṣāliḥ bin Sa'd al-Suḥaymi, Prof. 'Abd al-Razzāq bin 'Abd al-Muḥsin al-'Abbād and Dr. Ibrāhīm bin 'Āmir al-Ruḥayli. We also appreciate the efforts of the editing board made up of Prof. 'Ali bin Muḥammad Nāṣir Faqīhi and Prof. Aḥmad bin 'Atiyyah al-Ghāmidi. Similarly, we thank the translator: Dr. 'Abdur-Razzaq 'Abdul-Majeed Alaro, as well as the translation's revision committee members: Dr. Haitham 'Abdulaziz Saab and brother Taalib Alexander.

It is our hope that Allāh (ﷻ) will make this work fruitful for all Muslims, as we conclude our supplication saying, "Praise be to Allāh, the Lord of all beings".

General Secretariat of
King Fahd Qur'ān Printing Complex

Introduction

Obviously, every Muslim realises the importance of Faith (*Imān*), alongside the numerous gains and advantages it has for the faithful, both in this life and in the life after death. Without a sound faith, no worldly or heavenly benefit can be obtained; hence, it is the greatest of all demands, the most important purpose and the noblest of all aims. With Faith, man has a unique opportunity to lead a happy life and be safe from misfortunes, evils and difficulties. He will also be rewarded in the hereafter and live therein in eternal bliss and permanent comfort, which will neither expire nor vanish. Allāh (ﷻ) says,

﴿ مَنْ عَمِلَ صَٰلِحًا مِّن ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أُنثَىٰ وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَلَنُحْيِيَنَّهُۥ حَيَوٰةً طَيِّبَةً ۖ وَلَنَجْزِيَنَّهُمْ أَجْرَهُم بِأَحْسَنِ مَا كَانُوا۟ يَعْمَلُونَ ﴾.

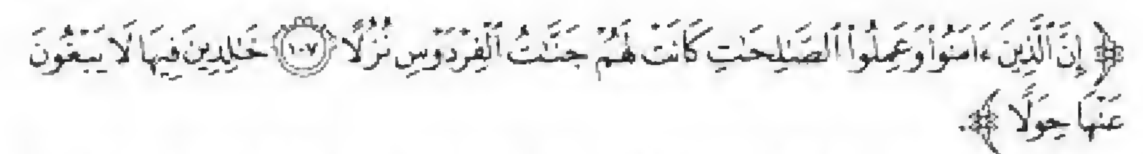
Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer, We will surely cause him to lead a good life, and We shall certainly give them their reward in proportion to the best of what they used to do. (al-Naḥl: 97).

﴿ وَمَنْ أَرَادَ ٱلْءَاخِرَةَ وَسَعَىٰ لَهَا سَعْيَهَا وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَأُو۟لَٰٓئِكَ كَانَ سَعْيُهُم مَّشْكُورًا ﴾.

And whoever desires the hereafter and exerts the effort due to it while he is a believer- it is those whose effort is ever appreciated by [Allāh]. (al-Isrā': 19).

﴿ وَمَن يَأْتِهِۦ مُؤْمِنًا قَدْ عَمِلَ ٱلصَّٰلِحَٰتِ فَأُو۟لَٰٓئِكَ لَهُمُ ٱلدَّرَجَٰتُ ٱلْعُلَىٰ ﴾.

But whoever comes to Him as a believer, having done good deeds; for such will be the highest degrees. (Ṭā-Hā: 75).



Indeed, those who believe and do righteous deeds; they shall have the garden of Paradise as a lodging. Wherein they will abide forever, and shall not desire any transfer from it. (al-Kahf: 107, 108). Many other *ayahs* (i.e. verses) of the Glorious Qur'ān have also spoken in the same tone.

Faith (*Īmān*), according to proofs from both the Qur'ān and the *Sunnah*, is based on six principles. These are:

1- Belief in God (Allāh).

2- Belief in His Angels.

3- Belief in His Books.

4- Belief in His Messengers.

5- Belief in the Last Day.

6- Belief in Predestination, whether favourable or unfavourable.

The above articles of faith are mentioned in many places in the Book of Allāh as well as in the *Sunnah* of His Prophet (ﷺ), including:

١- ﴿يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوٓاْ ءَامِنُواْ بِٱللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِۦ وَٱلۡكِتَٰبِ ٱلَّذِي نَزَّلَ عَلَىٰ رَسُولِهِۦ وَٱلۡكِتَٰبِ ٱلَّذِيٓ أَنزَلَ مِن قَبۡلُۚ وَمَن يَكۡفُرۡ بِٱللَّهِ وَمَلَٰٓئِكَتِهِۦ وَكُتُبِهِۦ وَرُسُلِهِۦ وَٱلۡيَوۡمِ ٱلۡأٓخِرِ فَقَدۡ ضَلَّ ضَلَٰلَۢا بَعِيدًا﴾.

1- O you who believe, believe[1] in Allāh and His Messenger and the Book He has revealed to His Messenger and that which He

1- As for those who have believed already, they are being commanded here to confirm and adhere to their faith. (Translator)

had sent down before. Whoever disbelieves in Allāh, His angels, His Books, His Messengers and the Last Day has certainly wandered far astray. (al-Nisā': 136).

٢- ﴿ لَيْسَ الْبِرَّ أَن تُوَلُّوا وُجُوهَكُمْ قِبَلَ الْمَشْرِقِ وَالْمَغْرِبِ وَلَٰكِنَّ الْبِرَّ مَنْ آمَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَالْمَلَائِكَةِ وَالْكِتَابِ وَالنَّبِيِّينَ ﴾.

2- Righteousness is not that you [merely] turn your faces to the east or the west[1], but righteousness is [the quality of he] who believes in Allāh, the Last Day, the Angels, the Book and the Prophets… (al-Baqarah: 177).

٣- ﴿ آمَنَ الرَّسُولُ بِمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْهِ مِن رَّبِّهِ وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ كُلٌّ آمَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَمَلَائِكَتِهِ وَكُتُبِهِ وَرُسُلِهِ لَا نُفَرِّقُ بَيْنَ أَحَدٍ مِّن رُّسُلِهِ وَقَالُوا سَمِعْنَا وَأَطَعْنَا غُفْرَانَكَ رَبَّنَا وَإِلَيْكَ الْمَصِيرُ ﴾.

3- The Messenger has believed in what was revealed to him from his Lord, and (so have) the believers. All of them did believe in Allāh, His angels, His Books and His Messengers [saying], "We make no distinction between any of His Messengers. And they say, "We hear and we obey. [We seek] Your Forgiveness, our Lord, and to you is the [ultimate] return. (al-Baqarah: 285).

٤- ﴿ إِنَّا كُلَّ شَيْءٍ خَلَقْنَاهُ بِقَدَرٍ ﴾.

4- We have indeed created all things with predestination. (al-Qamar: 49).

1- i.e. in *ṣalāh* (Prayer). (Translator)

5- 'Umar bin al-Khaṭṭāb (ﷺ) narrated, according to the famous *ḥadīth* of Jibrīl as reported by Muslim in his *Ṣaḥīḥ*[1], that Angel *Jibrīl* (Gabriel) asked the Prophet (ﷺ) about Faith. He replied,

(أن تؤمن بالله، وملائكته، وكتبه، ورسله، واليوم الآخر، وتؤمن بالقدر خيره وشره).

"[Faith is] to believe in Allāh, His angels, His Books, His Messengers, the Last Day, and in Predestination, whether auspicious or inauspicious". (*Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, *ḥadīth* no. 1).

These six great foundations or articles of Faith are indispensable. Furthermore, they are all inherent qualities of Faith; no part of them can be separated from the other. Believing in any of them, therefore, presupposes belief in the rest, while to have disbelieved in any, equally amounts to being an unbeliever in all. Hence, every Muslim must attach importance to the articles of Faith, both in learning them and in acting in line with their teachings.

In the following pages, we shall discuss the first article of Faith, viz. the Belief in God (Allāh).

1- *Ṣaḥīḥ* is the name given to certain books or compilations of the *ḥadīth* or prophetic tradition, which are regarded to be most authentic. (Translator)

SECTION ONE: BELIEF IN ALLĀH

The prime article of Faith and its most important foundation is to believe in Allāh (ﷻ), while the remaining articles are only branches or subdivisions of this.

To have faith in Allāh means believing in His uniqueness regarding lordship, divinity, as well as names and attributes, as these elements represent the bases of the belief in Allāh. Furthermore, Islam, the true religion is also known as *Tawḥīd*, for it is based on believing in the oneness of God regarding His sovereignty and acts; His essence, names and attributes; and His being an object of worship. It is thus, inferable from this that the *Tawḥīd* professed by the Prophets and Messengers of Allāh has three ramifications, namely:

1- *Tawḥīd al-Rubūbiyyah* (Oneness of Lordship).

This indicates believing in Allāh (ﷻ) as the Lord and Possessor of everything; its Creator and Provider, who gives life and has the power to revoke it. The Beneficent, who is also capable of inflicting harm, and it is only He who responds favourably to invocation in hard times. He has control of all matters; every goodness is at His disposal, and to Him everything shall return. No partner has He in any of the aforementioned qualities.

2- *Tawḥīd al-Ulūhiyyah* (Oneness of Divinity).

This means worshipping only Allāh with all forms of worship, such as submission, humility, and adoration, reverence, bowing down, prostration, sacrificial offering, and vow. None should be associated with Him in any of these acts.

3- *Tawḥīd al-Asmā' wa al-Ṣifāt* (Oneness of Names and Attributes).

That is to believe in the exclusive possession by Allāh, of names and attributes attributed to Him either in His Glorious Book or in the *Sunnah* of His Prophet (ﷺ). This also entails exalting Him above any defect or shortcoming, and not to liken Him to any of His creatures in anything known to be His special quality. Moreover, the believer must believe in Allāh's knowledge of all things, and His ability to do whatever He wants. That He is the Ever-living, who sustains and protects all beings, and neither drowsiness nor sleep overtakes Him. His Volition is all-time effective, and His Wisdom always far-reaching. The All-hearing, All-seeing God. The Compassionate, the Merciful, who rose over the mighty Throne, and has full grip on His dominion. The King and the Holy; He is totally free from defects and is the Giver of security. The Overwhelming, the Almighty, the Compeller and the Supreme; Glory be to Him, and exalted is He above all that they ascribe to Him as partners. All of these and other most beautiful names and lofty attributes of Allāh must be believed in.

There are numerous proofs from both the Book of Allāh and the *Sunnah* of His Prophet on each of the aforementioned divisions of *Tawḥīd*. Indeed, the Glorious Qur'ān as a whole is all about *Tawḥīd*, its rights, as well as gains of being a monotheist. In addition to the issue of *Shirk* (Polytheism), the polytheists and their punishment.

Muslim scholars have deduced the three branches of *Tawḥīd* after thorough exploration and close examination of related Qur'ān and *Sunnah* texts. This has led them to conclude that mankind are required to believe in oneness of Allāh regarding His lordship, divinity, names and attributes. Anyone who fails to believe in this is an unbeliever. A more detailed explanation of the three divisions of *Tawḥīd* will now follow.

Chapter One: Oneness of Lordship (*Tawḥīd al-Rubūbiyyah*)

1.1 Meaning and proofs from the Qur'ān and the *Sunnah*, as well as rational and instinctive proofs

1.1.1 Meaning:

a) Linguistically, the word *rubūbiyyah* is the verbal noun of '*rababa*', from which another word '*rabb*' has been derived. The term '*al-Rubūbiyyah*', on the other hand, is an attribute of Allāh (ﷻ). Having been derived from the noun '*al-Rabb*' (i.e. Lord), which further suggests a host of meanings in the Arabic language, such as an owner of something, an obeyed master or sovereign, and a reformer.

b) *Tawḥīd al-Rubūbiyyah* as a technical term, however, means believing that Allāh is one and unique in all His acts. These include His acts of creating, providing, possessing, shaping, bestowal and denial, benefiting and inflicting harm, as well as causing anyone or anything to live or die. His ability to preordain, His Sovereignty, Kindness, Perfect control and management, and all other acts ascribed exclusively to Him. One must believe in them all.

1.1.2 Proofs

a) Qur'ānic proofs

Allāh (ﷻ) says,

﴿ خَلَقَ ٱلسَّمَٰوَٰتِ بِغَيۡرِ عَمَدٖ تَرَوۡنَهَاۖ وَأَلۡقَىٰ فِي ٱلۡأَرۡضِ رَوَٰسِيَ أَن تَمِيدَ بِكُمۡ وَبَثَّ فِيهَا مِن كُلِّ دَآبَّةٖۚ وَأَنزَلۡنَا مِنَ ٱلسَّمَآءِ مَآءٗ فَأَنۢبَتۡنَا فِيهَا مِن كُلِّ زَوۡجٖ كَرِيمٍ ١٠ هَٰذَا خَلۡقُ ٱللَّهِ فَأَرُونِي مَاذَا خَلَقَ ٱلَّذِينَ مِن دُونِهِۦۚ بَلِ ٱلظَّٰلِمُونَ فِي ضَلَٰلٖ مُّبِينٖ ﴾.

"He (Allāh) has created the heavens without any pillars that you see, and cast into the earth firm mountains, lest it should shake with you. He similarly dispersed, therein, moving creatures of all kinds. And We (Allāh) send down water from the sky, and We cause [plants] of every good kind to grow therein. This is the creation of Allāh . Show Me then, what those (whom you worship) beside Him have created. Rather, the wrongdoers are in clear error". (Luqmān: 10, 11).

﴿ أَمۡ خُلِقُواْ مِنۡ غَيۡرِ شَيۡءٍ أَمۡ هُمُ ٱلۡخَٰلِقُونَ ﴾.

"Were they created by nothing, or were they themselves the creators"? (al-Ṭūr: 35).

b) Proofs from the *Sunnah*:

Aḥmad and Abū Dawūd both narrated on the authority of 'Abdullah bin al-Shikhīr (ﷺ), that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said,

(السيد الله تبارك وتعالى ...).

"Allāh is the *Sayyid* (Master or Lord), glorified and exalted is He".

In another narration by Tirmidhī and others, the Prophet (ﷺ) once advised Ibn 'Abbas in the following way:

(... واعلم أنّ الأمة لو اجتمعت على أن ينفعوك بشيء لم ينفعوك إلاّ بشيء قد كتبـــه الله لك، وإن اجتمعوا على أن يضرُّوك بشيء لم يضرُّوك إلاّ بشيء قد كتبه الله عليك، رُفعت الأقلام وجفّت الصحف).

"Know that if people were to unite to do you a favour, they could do that only to the extent of what Allāh has preordained for you. And were they to unite to inflict any harm on you, they could likewise do so only to the extent of what He has predestined to befall you. The pens are already withdrawn and the pages [of the book of fate] have dried up". (*Sunan al-Tirmidhī*: 2516 and the *Musnad by Aḥmad*: vol. i p. 307[1]).

c) Rational proof:

Allāh's existence, His exclusive qualities of lordship, and His absolute power and control over His creations are all indisputable even by the way of logical reasoning, which involves pondering over the signs of Allāh that are, at the same time, proofs of His existence. Reflecting on those signs and consequently deriving proof of Allāh's Lordship there from is usually done in different ways, the most common of which are:

1- Pondering over the signs of Allāh regarding creation of the human soul, otherwise known as: **'Evidence of the Human Soul'**.

1- This is a sound tradition, according to al-Ḥākim, while Tirmidhī classified it as *ḥasan-ṣaḥīḥ*.

The human soul is one of Allāh's great signs suggesting clearly that He is the only and unique Lord, who has neither associates nor partners. Thus, He has said,

﴿ وَفِىٓ أَنفُسِكُمْ ۚ أَفَلَا تُبْصِرُونَ ﴾.

And also in your selves [there are signs], will you not then see? (al-Dhāriyāt: 21).

﴿ وَنَفْسٍ وَمَا سَوَّىٰهَا ﴾.

And [by] the soul, and Him who perfected it. (al-Shams: 7).

Anybody who reflects deeply on the marvellous work of Allāh as manifested in the very making of his own soul, will realize the existence of an All-wise, All-aware Lord and Creator. It is impossible for man to have created a drop of sperm, the genesis of his own creation. Neither is it conceivable that he himself converted the drop of sperm into a clot; nor that he transformed the clot into a little lump of flesh; nor that he fashioned the little lump into bones, or clothed the bones with flesh.

2- Reflecting on the signs of Allāh regarding the creation of the universe. This is also known as **'Evidence of the Universe'**, and it constitutes another great sign of Allāh cogently indicating His Lordship. A Qur'ānic verse goes thus:

﴿ سَنُرِيهِمْ ءَايَٰتِنَا فِى ٱلْءَافَاقِ وَفِىٓ أَنفُسِهِمْ حَتَّىٰ يَتَبَيَّنَ لَهُمْ أَنَّهُ ٱلْحَقُّ ۗ أَوَلَمْ يَكْفِ بِرَبِّكَ أَنَّهُۥ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَىْءٍ شَهِيدٌ ﴾.

We shall show them Our signs in the universe and in their own selves, until it becomes manifest to them that it [This Qur'ān] is

the truth. Is it not sufficient in regard to your Lord that He is a Witness over all things? (Fuṣṣilat: 53).

Whoever thinks deeply about the universe, the heaven and the earth, and all that is found therein, such as the stars, the sun, the moon, the mountains, the trees, the seas, and the rivers; furthermore, what encloses them all of night and day, and the impeccable running of the universe as a whole, will conclude that an entity of such magnitude must have a creator and administrator who is solely responsible for its running. Moreover, the more a sensible person ponders, with deep consideration, over these amazing and unprecedented creations of Allāh, the closer he comes to realizing that they are all created for the truth and with the truth. That they are scrolls of signs and books of evidence and proof of all what Allāh has informed us concerning Himself, and of His oneness.

A tradition has it that a group of people once came to argue with Imām Abū-Ḥanīfah(1) on the question of believing in Allāh as the only and unique Lord, (*Tawḥīd al-Rubūbiyyah*). The Imām said to them, "Before we ever begin to talk on this issue, may I ask you to inform me of a boat found on the Tigris River, which leaves the coast by itself, gets itself filled with foodstuff and other things, and then returns to the coast and anchors also without the intervention of anyone"! The answer from the group was, "This is implausible,

1- Imam Abū Ḥanīfah is one of the leading Muslim scholars after whom the four schools of Muslim law are named. The rest are Mālik, al-Shāfi'i and Aḥmad bin Ḥanbal, may Allāh have mercy on them. (Translator)

absolutely impossible". At that point the Imām remarked: "If that is impossible in the case of an ordinary boat, how then can it be feasible with regard to the whole universe with all its heights and depths"?

Thus, Imām Abu-Ḥanīfah has highlighted the congruity of the universe, the accuracy of its making, and the perfection of its creation as clear evidence on the oneness and uniqueness of the Creator.

1.2. Believing in *Tawḥīd al-Rubūbiyyah* alone cannot save the believer from punishment

As we have mentioned earlier, believing in oneness of Lordship is one of the three constituent parts of Islamic monotheism; no belief in the oneness of Allāh could, therefore, be valid without it. However, this aspect of *Tawḥīd* has never been the purpose behind the coming of Allāh's Messengers to their people, and as such cannot alone earn a person immunity to Allāh's punishment, should he/she fail to supplement it with another inherent component of *Tawḥīd*, which is *Tawḥīd al-Ulūhiyyah*. Allāh says,

﴿ وَمَا يُؤْمِنُ أَكْثَرُهُم بِٱللَّهِ إِلَّا وَهُم مُّشْرِكُونَ ﴾.

And most of them believe not in Allāh except that they attribute partners [to Him]. (Yūsūf: 106).

The import here is that, even though most of them fulfil the requirement of *Tawḥīd al-Rubūbiyyah* and thus believe in Allāh as their Lord, Creator and Provider, in whose Hands is the control of all affairs, yet they associate partners with Him through worshipping other things, such as idols that are neither capable of inflicting harm or extending benefit, nor have they the ability to bestow or deprive anyone of any good. What has been given here as the meaning of this verse is in fact a representation of the opinion of the *Mufassirūn* (Scholars who comment on the meaning of the Glorious Qur'ān) among the Companions of the Prophet as well as their followers.

Ibn 'Abbās said, "It was part of their Faith to say, whenever they were asked: "Who created the heavens, the earth, and the mountains"?, 'Allāh', yet they were polytheists". In his remark, 'Ikrimah said, "If you ask them: "Who created them, the heavens and the earth"?, they answer, 'Allāh'. Their Faith is all about this, but they still worship others besides Him". Mujāhid, another prominent scholar also commented saying, "Their Faith was just what they declared of their belief in Allāh as their Creator, who sustains them and would eventually cause them to die. That was nevertheless, a faith coupled with *Shirk,* for they also worshipped other than Allāh". And in the words of 'Abd al-Raḥmān bin Zayd bin Aslam bin Zayd, "No one worships something besides Allāh, unless he has certain belief in Him, and knows that He is his Lord, Creator and Provider, even though he associates partners with Him. Can't you reflect on how Prophet Ibrāhīm addressed his people saying,

﴿قَالَ أَفَرَءَيْتُم مَّا كُنتُمْ تَعْبُدُونَ ﴿٧٥﴾ أَنتُمْ وَءَابَآؤُكُمُ ٱلْأَقْدَمُونَ ﴿٧٦﴾ فَإِنَّهُمْ عَدُوٌّ لِّيٓ إِلَّا رَبَّ ٱلْعَٰلَمِينَ﴾.

See now that which you have been worshipping, you and your forefathers. They are all indeed an enemy to me, save the Lord of the worlds. (al-Shu'arā': 75-77)[1].

Sayings of our pious predecessors in this regard are numerous. Besides, pagans in the days of the Prophet (ﷺ) also believed in Allāh as their Lord, the Creator, the Provider, who controls and manage all

1- Ibn Jarir, *al-Tafsīr* vol. vii pp. 312-313.

things. They were, however, unbelievers, on account of their worship, having set up with Allāh some associates whom they invoked and called upon for help, whenever they were in need.

In many places has the Glorious Qur'ān stated that the polytheists, in spite of their worshipping other deities, believe in the Lordship of Allāh (ﷻ). Allāh says in some of these instances,

﴿ وَلَئِن سَأَلْتَهُم مَّنْ خَلَقَ ٱلسَّمَٰوَٰتِ وَٱلْأَرْضَ وَسَخَّرَ ٱلشَّمْسَ وَٱلْقَمَرَ لَيَقُولُنَّ ٱللَّهُ فَأَنَّىٰ يُؤْفَكُونَ ﴾.

And if you were to ask them: who created the heavens and the earth, and subjected the sun and the moon [to their appointed functions]? they would surely reply, 'Allāh'. How then are they turned away? (al-'Ankabūt: 61).

﴿ وَلَئِن سَأَلْتَهُم مَّن نَّزَّلَ مِنَ ٱلسَّمَآءِ مَآءً فَأَحْيَا بِهِ ٱلْأَرْضَ مِنۢ بَعْدِ مَوْتِهَا لَيَقُولُنَّ ٱللَّهُ ۚ قُلِ ٱلْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ ۚ بَلْ أَكْثَرُهُمْ لَا يَعْقِلُونَ ﴾.

And were you to ask them: who causes water to come down from the sky, and revives therewith the earth after its death? They would certainly say, 'Allāh'. Say, "Praise be to Allāh"! But most of them have no sense. (al-'Ankabūt: 63).

﴿ وَلَئِن سَأَلْتَهُم مَّنْ خَلَقَهُمْ لَيَقُولُنَّ ٱللَّهُ فَأَنَّىٰ يُؤْفَكُونَ ﴾.

And if you ask them who created them, they will surely say, 'Allāh'. How then are they turned away? (al-Zukhruf: 87).

﴿ قُل لِّمَنِ ٱلْأَرْضُ وَمَن فِيهَآ إِن كُنتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٨٤﴾ سَيَقُولُونَ لِلَّهِ ۚ قُلْ أَفَلَا تَذَكَّرُونَ ﴿٨٥﴾ قُلْ مَن رَّبُّ ٱلسَّمَٰوَٰتِ ٱلسَّبْعِ وَرَبُّ ٱلْعَرْشِ ٱلْعَظِيمِ ﴿٨٦﴾ سَيَقُولُونَ لِلَّهِ ۚ قُلْ أَفَلَا تَتَّقُونَ ﴿٨٧﴾ قُلْ مَنۢ بِيَدِهِۦ مَلَكُوتُ كُلِّ شَىْءٍ وَهُوَ يُجِيرُ وَلَا يُجَارُ عَلَيْهِ إِن كُنتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٨٨﴾ سَيَقُولُونَ لِلَّهِ ۚ قُلْ فَأَنَّىٰ تُسْحَرُونَ ﴾.

Say, "To whom belongs the earth and whoever is therein, if you know"! They will say, 'To Allāh'. Say, "Will you not then remember"? Say, "Who is the Lord of the seven heavens and the Lord of the great Throne"? They will say, "To Allāh [all that belongs]". Say, "Will you not then fear [Him]"? Say, "In whose hands is the dominion over all things, He protects [the creation], but against Him there is no protection, if you know". They will say, "To Allāh [all that belongs"]. Say, "How then are you distracted"? (al-Mu'minūn: 84-89).

At no time have the polytheists considered their idols to be the one sending the rain or providing the needs of Allāh's creatures. Neither did they believe that the idols have control of the affairs of the world. All this they regarded as distinctive qualities of Allāh, as they admitted that the idols they called upon instead of Him were ordinary creatures that could benefit or harm neither themselves nor their worshippers. Equally, they believed that those idols possessed neither death, nor life, nor the power to raise the dead, and that they even hear or see not. They acknowledged that the ability to do all this belongs only to Allāh, and that neither they nor their idols have any share of it. Furthermore, they held that Allāh alone is the Creator and the Lord, and all that exists besides Him are created by Him and under His control. Those polytheists, however, attributed to Allāh partners and intermediaries from His own creation, whom they thought could intercede with Him on their behalf and bring them closer to Him. On this, Allāh (ﷻ) has said,

﴿وَٱلَّذِينَ ٱتَّخَذُواْ مِن دُونِهِۦٓ أَوْلِيَآءَ مَا نَعْبُدُهُمْ إِلَّا لِيُقَرِّبُونَآ إِلَى ٱللَّهِ زُلْفَىٰٓ﴾.

And those who choose protectors besides Allāh [say,] "We worship them only that they may bring us nearer to Him". (al-Zumar: 3). i.e. That they may intercede with Allāh on their behalf, to gain His provision and help in whatever may befall them of worldly calamities.

The polytheists were not regarded as Muslims, despite this general attestation concerning their belief in Allāh's Lordship. On the contrary, Allāh declared them unbelievers and polytheists, and threatened to punish them with the everlasting torment of Hell. While His Messenger (ﷺ) also declared killing them and confiscating their wealth as lawful, because of their failure to confirm their belief in Allāh's Lordship through worshipping Him alone.

It is thus clear that believing in Allāh's Lordship alone without believing in Him as the only object of worship is not enough and cannot save one from His punishment. Rather, such faith in Allāh's Lordship must be seen as substantial evidence indicating that religion should be solely for Allāh, and that mankind should worship none but Him alone.

1.3 Aspects of deviation concerning *Tawḥīd al-Rubūbiyyah*

Human beings generally have natural dispositions to believe in the oneness of Lord, in addition to a wide range of evidence pointing to this as well. In spite of this, we could notice certain errors being committed by some people. A summary of those areas where people do deviate in this respect is given as follows:

1- Outright denial of Allāh's Lordship and disbelieving in His very existence constitutes a major aspect of this deviation. One could observe this in the attitudes of atheists who see Allāh's creations as mere manifestations of nature or just a consequence of time vicissitude, or something of that kind. Allāh (ﷻ) says,

﴿ وَقَالُوا۟ مَا هِىَ إِلَّا حَيَاتُنَا ٱلدُّنْيَا نَمُوتُ وَنَحْيَا وَمَا يُهْلِكُنَآ إِلَّا ٱلدَّهْرُ ﴾.

And they say, "There is nothing but our life in this world; we die and we live, and nothing but time destroys us". (al-Jāthiyah: 24).

2- Another aspect of deviation in this regard is to deny some of Allāh's characteristics or part of the features of His Lordship. Such as when a person disbelieves in Allāh's power to cause him to die or to bring him back to life after his death. Or when he denies Allāh's ability to bring forth to him any good and repel any harm, etc.

3- A third way of this deviation is to give any of Allāh's qualities of Lordship to someone or something else. Thus, it is an act of *shirk* to regard something or someone as having a share with Allāh in His control of the universe regarding any facet of this control, such as creation and destruction; giving life to anyone and taking it back;

bringing about any benefit and warding off any evil, as well as all other features of Lordship.

Chapter Two: Oneness of Divinity (*Tawḥīd al-Ulūhiyyah*)

The word '*Ulūhiyyah*' is a derivative of *ilāh,* which means god or deity. *Al-Ilāh* (The Divine or God) is therefore one of the most beautiful names of Allāh (ﷻ), while *al-Ulūhiyyah* (Divinity) constitutes a great attribute of His. Accordingly, Allāh is the only true God whom every soul must worship, submit to, humiliate itself before, and comply fully with His injunctions, for He is the Great Lord who created the universe, and has its absolute control. He embodies every quality of perfection, and is free from any defect. Men should not submit or humiliate themselves before any other being save Allāh, who, alone, has created and originated all that exists, and has the exclusive power to reproduce them; hence, none but Him alone should be worshipped.

Tawḥīd al-Ulūhiyyah is to worship none but Allāh, meaning that one should know for sure that Allāh alone and not any other being is worthy of worship. Moreover, the qualities and features of a divine nature are exclusively His, and none but He alone merits them.

Anyone who knows this and believes in it would make Allāh his only object of worship and serve Him with all forms of worship, noticeable and unnoticeable alike. Thus, you find him/her performing outward acts, such as *Ṣalāh* (prayer), *Zakah* (compulsory almsgiving), *Ṣiyām* (Fasting) and *Ḥajj* (Pilgrimage). He would be encouraging others to do what is right and forbid them to do what is wrong, be dutiful towards his parents and be kind to his relatives as well.

Similarly, such a person would not neglect the inward principles of religion, which are the belief in Allāh, in His angels, His Books, His Messengers, the Last Day, and in preordainment; whether favourable or unfavourable. His objective in doing all that will be nothing save to satisfy his Lord and gain His reward.

We shall now discuss in this chapter, some important issues relating to this aspect of *Tawḥīd*.

2.1 Proofs and importance of *Tawḥīd al-Ulūhiyyah*

2.1.1 Proofs

The proofs indicating the obligation of believing in Allāh as the only God who is worthy of worship are ample and numerous. They have also been expressed in a variety of ways as follows:

a) A command may come in this regard, as expressed in the following verses:

﴿ يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلنَّاسُ ٱعۡبُدُواْ رَبَّكُمُ ٱلَّذِي خَلَقَكُمۡ وَٱلَّذِينَ مِن قَبۡلِكُمۡ لَعَلَّكُمۡ تَتَّقُونَ ﴾.

O mankind! Worship your Lord who has created you and those before you, so that you may become pious. (al-Baqarah: 21)

﴿ وَٱعۡبُدُواْ ٱللَّهَ وَلَا تُشۡرِكُواْ بِهِۦ شَيۡـٔٗاۖ ﴾.

Worship Allāh, and ascribe none as partner to Him. (al-Nisā': 36)

﴿ وَقَضَىٰ رَبُّكَ أَلَّا تَعۡبُدُوٓاْ إِلَّآ إِيَّاهُ ﴾.

And you Lord has decreed that you worship none but Him. (al-Isrā': 23).

b) Sometimes, the body of a Qur'ānic text will illustrate this type of *Tawḥīd* as the basis of creation and the purpose of bringing mankind and *jinn* into existence. Allāh (ﷻ) says,

﴿ وَمَا خَلَقۡتُ ٱلۡجِنَّ وَٱلۡإِنسَ إِلَّا لِيَعۡبُدُونِ ﴾.

And I created not the *jinn* and mankind except that they should worship Me. (al-Dhāriyāt: 56).

c) At times this aspect of *Tawḥīd* is explained to be the motive for the coming of Allāh's Messengers. The Qur'ānic verses in this respect include:

﴿ وَلَقَدۡ بَعَثۡنَا فِي كُلِّ أُمَّةٖ رَّسُولًا أَنِ ٱعۡبُدُواْ ٱللَّهَ وَٱجۡتَنِبُواْ ٱلطَّٰغُوتَۖ ﴾.

And indeed, We have raised in every nation a Messenger [proclaiming:] Worship Allāh and shun false gods. (al- Naḥl: 36).

﴿ وَمَآ أَرۡسَلۡنَا مِن قَبۡلِكَ مِن رَّسُولٍ إِلَّا نُوحِيٓ إِلَيۡهِ أَنَّهُۥ لَآ إِلَٰهَ إِلَّآ أَنَا۠ فَٱعۡبُدُونِ ﴾.

And We sent no Messenger before you unless We revealed to him [saying,] "There is no god worthy of worship but I, so worship Me". (al-Anbiyā': 25).

d) At some other times, this form of *Tawḥīd* is described as the purpose of Allāh's revelations. Allāh (ﷻ) says,

﴿ يُنَزِّلُ ٱلۡمَلَٰٓئِكَةَ بِٱلرُّوحِ مِنۡ أَمۡرِهِۦ عَلَىٰ مَن يَشَآءُ مِنۡ عِبَادِهِۦٓ أَنۡ أَنذِرُوٓاْ أَنَّهُۥ لَآ إِلَٰهَ إِلَّآ أَنَا۠ فَٱتَّقُونِ ﴾.

He [Allāh] sends down the angels with the revelation of His command to whomever He wills among His servants that 'Warn [my creatures]; there is no god worthy of worship but I, therefore fear Me'. (al-Naḥl: 2).

e) Sometimes, this may take the form of an explanation of the tremendous gains, ample reward, and generous grace Allāh has for whoever believes in this aspect of *Tawḥīd,* both in this life and in the life to come. Thus, a Qur'ānic verse reads as follows:

﴿ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ وَلَمْ يَلْبِسُوٓاْ إِيمَٰنَهُم بِظُلْمٍ أُوْلَٰٓئِكَ لَهُمُ ٱلْأَمْنُ وَهُم مُّهْتَدُونَ﴾.

Those who believe and obscure not their faith with *zulm*[1], theirs is security, and they are rightly guided. (al-An'ām: 82).

f) Another way this is usually explained is to warn against its opposite. This may also involve mentioning the risk involved in doing the opposite, as well as what Allāh has kept in reserve as punishment for those who ignore this *Tawḥīd*. Allāh (ﷻ) says,

﴿إِنَّهُۥ مَن يُشْرِكْ بِٱللَّهِ فَقَدْ حَرَّمَ ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ ٱلْجَنَّةَ وَمَأْوَىٰهُ ٱلنَّارُ وَمَا لِلظَّٰلِمِينَ مِنْ أَنصَارٍ﴾.

Whoever associates partners with Allāh, for such Allāh has indeed forbidden Paradise, and his abode will be Fire. For wrongdoers there will be no helpers. (al- Mā'idah: 72).

﴿وَلَا تَجْعَلْ مَعَ ٱللَّهِ إِلَٰهًا ءَاخَرَ فَتُلْقَىٰ فِي جَهَنَّمَ مَلُومًا مَّدْحُورًا﴾.

Do not set up with Allāh any other god, lest you be cast into Hell, reproved and abandoned. (al-Isrā': 39).

This and many other types of proof affirm the belief in oneness of Allāh. They similarly contain an invitation to it, as well as reference to its virtue, reward, and the severity of the punishment, which acting in contrast to it may entail.

There are still in the Prophetic tradition many other proofs with respect to this *Tawḥīd al-Ulūhiyyah* and its importance. They include:

1- Linguistically, the word 'ẓulm' means wrong, injustice, oppression etc. But here it denotes *shirk* or worshipping other than Allāh, as has been clarified in a *ḥadīth*. (Translator)

1- According to Bukhāri in his *ḥadīth* compilation, Mu'ādh bin Jabal (ﷺ) narrated saying, "The Prophet (ﷺ) said, **"O Mu'adh! Do you know the right Allāh has over His servants"?** Mu'ādh replied, "Allāh and His Messenger know best". The Prophet then said, **"To worship Him alone, associating none as partners with Him. Do you also know what is due to them from Him"?** Mu'adh said, "Allāh and His Messenger know best". The Prophet (ﷺ) said, **"Not to punish them [if it is He alone they worship]".** (*Bukhāri*: 7373).

2- Ibn 'Abbas (رضي الله عنهما) narrated saying, as the Prophet (ﷺ) was sending Mu'ādh on a mission to Yemen, he told him,

(إنك تقدم على قوم من أهل الكتاب فليكن أولَ ما تدعوهم إلى أن يوحِّدوا الله تعالى، فإذا عرفوا ذلك فأخبرهم أنَّ الله فرض عليهم خمس صلوات ...).

You are going to a nation of the People of the Book. The first thing to which you should invite them is to believe that Allāh is one and only. If they appear to have known this, then inform them of the five[daily] prayers Allāh has enjoined on them... (*Bukhāri*: 7372).

3- Another *ḥadīth* reported by Ibn Mas'ūd (ﷺ) quoted the Prophet (ﷺ) as saying,

(مَن مات وهو يدعو من دون الله ندًّا دخل النار).

Whoever dies while still invoking something other than Allāh[1] as a rival to Him, such a person will be admitted into Hell-fire. (*Bukhāri*: 4497).

1- i.e. worshipping something or someone of Allāh's creatures. *Du'ā'* or invocation is an act of worship. (Translator)

4- Jābir bin 'Abdullah (ﷺ) also narrated that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said,

(مَن لقي الله لا يُشرك به شيئاً دخل الجنّة، ومن لقيه يُشرك به شيئاً دخل النار).

Anyone who meets Allāh [at death], associating no partner with Him will be admitted into Paradise. But whoever meets Him and is a polytheist, he/she will enter Hell-fire. (*Muslim*; 93).

The *ḥadīths* relating to this issue are numerous.

2.1.2 *Tawḥīd al-Ulūhiyyah* as the core of all divine missions

No doubt, believing in Allāh as the only God who is worthy of worship is the greatest of all principles. It is also the most perfect, most superior and most imperative for mankind's welfare. Both mankind and *jinn*, and all other creatures have been created, just as the divine laws have been ordained for the purpose of fulfilling the obligation of this *Tawḥīd*. With the *Tawḥīd al-Ulūhiyyah* righteousness prevails, and without it evil and perversion will be the order of the day. Hence, it has been the essence of the mission of Allāh's Messengers, the objective of their message, and the foundation of their *Da'wah*. Allāh (ﷻ) says,

﴿ وَلَقَدْ بَعَثْنَا فِي كُلِّ أُمَّةٍ رَّسُولًا أَنِ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ وَاجْتَنِبُوا الطَّاغُوتَ ﴾.

And indeed, We have raised in every nation a Messenger [proclaiming:] "Worship Allāh and shun false gods". (al-Naḥl: 36).

﴿ وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِن قَبْلِكَ مِن رَّسُولٍ إِلَّا نُوحِي إِلَيْهِ أَنَّهُ لَا إِلَٰهَ إِلَّا أَنَا فَاعْبُدُونِ ﴾.

And We sent no Messenger before you unless We revealed to him [saying,] "There is no god worthy of worship but I, so worship Me". (al-Anbiyā': 25).

The Glorious Qur'ān has in so many places indicated that the *Tawḥīd al-Ulūhiyyah* was the key of all divine missions, adding that every messenger of Allāh did start his mission by calling his people to the belief in Allāh's oneness and to worship none but Him. Allāh (ﷻ) says,

﴿وَإِلَىٰ عَادٍ أَخَاهُمْ هُودًا ۗ قَالَ يَا قَوْمِ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ مَا لَكُم مِّنْ إِلَٰهٍ غَيْرُهُ﴾.

And to [the tribe of] 'Ād [We sent] their brother, Hūd, who said, "O my people! Worship Allāh, you have no other god worthy of worship but Him". (al-A'rāf: 65).

﴿وَإِلَىٰ ثَمُودَ أَخَاهُمْ صَالِحًا ۗ قَالَ يَا قَوْمِ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ مَا لَكُم مِّنْ إِلَٰهٍ غَيْرُهُ﴾.

And to [the tribe of] Thamūd [We sent] their brother, Ṣāliḥ, who said, "O my people! Worship Allāh, you have no other god worthy of worship but Him". (al-A'rāf: 73).

﴿وَإِلَىٰ مَدْيَنَ أَخَاهُمْ شُعَيْبًا ۗ قَالَ يَا قَوْمِ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ مَا لَكُم مِّنْ إِلَٰهٍ غَيْرُهُ﴾.

And to [the people of] Midian [We sent] their brother, Shu'aib, who said, "O my people! Worship Allāh, you have no other god worthy of worship but Him". (al-A'rāf: 85).

2.1.3 *Tawḥīd al-Ulūhiyyah* as the bone of contention between Allāh's Messengers and their people

We have mentioned earlier that this Tawḥīd has been the starting point for all divine missions. There was never a Messenger sent by Allāh who had not started his mission with an invitation to the belief in His oneness. The disputes between the Messengers and their respective people were, therefore, centred around this aspect of Faith. The Prophets asked them to believe in one and only God (Allāh) and to worship none but Him, while they, on their part, insisted on shirk and idolatry, except those of them whom Allāh had shown the right way. Regarding this, Almighty Allāh said of the people of Nūḥ (عليه السلام),

﴿وَقَالُوا۟ لَا تَذَرُنَّ ءَالِهَتَكُمْ وَلَا تَذَرُنَّ وَدًّا وَلَا سُوَاعًا وَلَا يَغُوثَ وَيَعُوقَ وَنَسْرًا ﴿٢٣﴾ وَقَدْ أَضَلُّوا۟ كَثِيرًا ۖ وَلَا تَزِدِ ٱلظَّٰلِمِينَ إِلَّا ضَلَٰلًا﴾.

And they said, "Forsake not your gods. Forsake not *Wadd*, nor *Suwā'*, nor *Yagūth*, nor *Ya'ūq*, nor *Nasr*[1]". And they have indeed led many astray. [O Allāh!] May You increase the wrongdoers in nothing save error. (Nūḥ: 23-24).

Allāh also said concerning the people of Hūd (عليه السلام);

﴿قَالُوٓا۟ أَجِئْتَنَا لِتَأْفِكَنَا عَنْ ءَالِهَتِنَا فَأْتِنَا بِمَا تَعِدُنَآ إِن كُنتَ مِنَ ٱلصَّٰدِقِينَ﴾.

They said, "Have you come to turn us away from our gods? Bring upon us then that which you threaten us with, if you are of the truthful". (al-Aḥqāf : 22).

1- These are names of the idols they worshipped then.

﴿قَالُوا۟ يَـٰهُودُ مَا جِئْتَنَا بِبَيِّنَةٍ وَمَا نَحْنُ بِتَارِكِىٓ ءَالِهَتِنَا عَن قَوْلِكَ وَمَا نَحْنُ لَكَ بِمُؤْمِنِينَ﴾

They said, "O Hūd! You have brought us no clear proof, and we shall not forsake our gods on your [mere] saying, and neither are we going to believe in you". (Hūd: 53).

And of the people of Ṣāliḥ (ﷺ), He has also said,

﴿قَالُوا۟ يَـٰصَـٰلِحُ قَدْ كُنتَ فِينَا مَرْجُوًّا قَبْلَ هَـٰذَآ ۖ أَتَنْهَىٰنَآ أَن نَّعْبُدَ مَا يَعْبُدُ ءَابَآؤُنَا وَإِنَّنَا لَفِى شَكٍّ مِّمَّا تَدْعُونَآ إِلَيْهِ مُرِيبٍ﴾.

They said, "O Ṣāliḥ! Hitherto, you have been a figure of good hope among us. Do you [now] ask us not to worship what our fathers used to worship? Really, we are in deed in serious doubt concerning that to which you call us". (Hūd: 62).

While of the people of Shu'aib (ﷺ) Allāh (ﷻ) says,

﴿قَالُوا۟ يَـٰشُعَيْبُ أَصَلَوٰتُكَ تَأْمُرُكَ أَن نَّتْرُكَ مَا يَعْبُدُ ءَابَآؤُنَآ أَوْ أَن نَّفْعَلَ فِىٓ أَمْوَٰلِنَا مَا نَشَـٰٓؤُا۟ ۖ إِنَّكَ لَأَنتَ ٱلْحَلِيمُ ٱلرَّشِيدُ﴾.

They said, "O Shu'aib! Does your prayer command you that we should abandon what our fathers used to worship, or that we should give up doing what we like with our own property? You are indeed, the mild, the rightly guided"! (Hūd: 87).

He also said regarding the unbelievers among the tribe of Quraish[1]:

﴿وَعَجِبُوٓا۟ أَن جَآءَهُم مُّنذِرٌ مِّنْهُمْ ۖ وَقَالَ ٱلْكَـٰفِرُونَ هَـٰذَا سَـٰحِرٌ كَذَّابٌ ﴿٤﴾ أَجَعَلَ ٱلْـَٔالِهَةَ إِلَـٰهًا وَٰحِدًا ۖ إِنَّ هَـٰذَا لَشَىْءٌ عُجَابٌ ﴿٥﴾ وَٱنطَلَقَ ٱلْمَلَأُ مِنْهُمْ أَنِ ٱمْشُوا۟ وَٱصْبِرُوا۟ عَلَىٰٓ ءَالِهَتِكُمْ ۖ إِنَّ هَـٰذَا لَشَىْءٌ يُرَادُ ﴿٦﴾ مَا سَمِعْنَا بِهَـٰذَا فِى ٱلْمِلَّةِ ٱلْـَٔاخِرَةِ إِنْ هَـٰذَآ إِلَّا ٱخْتِلَـٰقٌ﴾.

1- Quraish is the prominent Meccan tribe to which the Prophet (ﷺ) himself belonged.

And they wonder that a warner from among themselves has come to them, and the infidels say, "This is a sorcerer, an outright liar. Makes he the gods one God? This is, indeed, a curious thing". The chiefs among them went about [exhorting], "Go and be staunch to your gods, this is really something designed [against you]. We have not heard of this in the religion of these later days. This is nothing but an invention". (Ṣād: 4-7).

﴿ وَإِذَا رَأَوْكَ إِن يَتَّخِذُونَكَ إِلَّا هُزُوًا أَهَٰذَا الَّذِي بَعَثَ اللَّهُ رَسُولًا ﴿٤١﴾ إِن كَادَ لَيُضِلُّنَا عَنْ آلِهَتِنَا لَوْلَا أَن صَبَرْنَا عَلَيْهَا ۚ وَسَوْفَ يَعْلَمُونَ حِينَ يَرَوْنَ الْعَذَابَ مَنْ أَضَلُّ سَبِيلًا ﴿٤٢﴾ أَرَأَيْتَ مَنِ اتَّخَذَ إِلَٰهَهُ هَوَاهُ أَفَأَنتَ تَكُونُ عَلَيْهِ وَكِيلًا ﴿٤٣﴾ أَمْ تَحْسَبُ أَنَّ أَكْثَرَهُمْ يَسْمَعُونَ أَوْ يَعْقِلُونَ ۚ إِنْ هُمْ إِلَّا كَالْأَنْعَامِ ۖ بَلْ هُمْ أَضَلُّ سَبِيلًا ﴾.

And when they see you [Muḥammad] they treat you only in mockery [saying,] "Is this he whom Allāh has sent as a messenger? He would have almost misled us from our gods, had we not been steadfast [in worshipping] them". They will know, when they view the punishment, who is more astray concerning the [right] path. Have you seen him who adopted his own whims as his god, Would you then be a guardian over him? Or do you assume that most of them hear or understand? They are but as cattle, nay, they are farther astray! (al-Furqān: 41- 44).

The aforementioned texts and other similar ones are clear indications that the belief in one divine God and invitation to an unadulterated religion have been the main subject of disagreement between the Messengers of Allāh and the people of their time.

The prophet (ﷺ) said, as narrated in an authentic *ḥadīth*,

(أُمرت أن أقاتل الناس حتى يشهدوا أن لا إله إلاّ الله وأنّ محمداً رسول الله ويقيموا الصلاة ويؤتوا الزكاة، فإذا فعلوا ذلك عصموا منّي دماءهم وأموالهم إلاّ بحق الإسلام وحسابهم على الله).

"I have been ordered to fight people until they testify that none has the right to be worshipped save Allāh, and that Muḥammad is Allāh's Messenger, and perform (obligatory) *ṣalah* (prayer), and pay obligatory alms (*zakah*). If they do, then their lives and properties are safe, except in operation of any other Islamic injunction[1], and their reckoning will be with Allāh". (*Bukhāri*: 25; *Muslim*: 22).

Another authentic tradition has it that the Prophet (ﷺ) also said,

(من قال لا إله إلاّ الله وكفر بما يُعبد من دون الله حرُم ماله ودمه وحسابه على الله).

"Whoever proclaims "*La ilāha illa Allāh*" (None, but Allāh has the right to be worshipped), and has disbelieved in all other objects of worship besides Allāh, his/her life and property are thus protected, and to Allāh [alone] he/she will account [for his/her actions]". (*Muslim*: 23).

1- That is, any other cause that may necessitate the opposite in any given circumstance, such as murder for example. (Translator)

2.2 To worship none but Allāh alone is an obligation

2.2.1 Meaning of worship (*'Ibādah*) and its foundations

In a strict linguistic sense, the word *'ibādah* in Arabic means submission and humility. Hence, it is commonly said *"ba'īr mu'abbad"* for a docile camel, as a mark of its humiliation, and *"ṭarīq mu'abbad"* for a smooth or passable road, to indicate a beaten track.

In Islamic terms, *'ibādah* or worship encompasses all manifest or hidden acts and sayings that Allāh loves or assents to. This will be further explained when we mention in this book some forms of worship at a later stage.

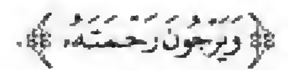
Worship in Islam has three basic elements, namely:

1- Complete love for Allāh (ﷻ). A Qur'ānic verse says,



As for those who have believed, they love Allāh more [than any other being]. (al-Baqarah: 165).

2- Absolute hope. Allāh, the Almighty, says in another verse,



And they hope for His (Allāh's) Mercy. (al-Isrā': 57).

3- Total fear of His Punishment. Allāh (ﷻ) says,



And they fear His punishment. (al-Isrā': 57).

An indication to these three elements of worship, combined together, appears in the opening *sūrah* (chapter) of the Glorious Qur'ān, where Allāh (ﷻ) says,

﴿ٱلْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ ٱلْعَٰلَمِينَ ﴿٢﴾ ٱلرَّحْمَٰنِ ٱلرَّحِيمِ ﴿٣﴾ مَٰلِكِ يَوْمِ ٱلدِّينِ﴾.

Praise be to Allāh the Lord of all beings. The Most Gracious, the Most Merciful. Owner of the Day of Reckoning. (al-Fātiḥah: 2-4).

The first verse expresses "love", for Allāh (ﷻ) is a Benefactor, and a benefactor is usually admired in accordance with the extent of his benefit. The second verse speaks of "hope", as we know that people usually hope for the mercy of anyone described as being merciful. While the third verse implies "fear", for there is tendency for anyone to fear the punishment of He who owns reckoning and recompense.

Thus, the clause following the above quoted verses immediately reads: ﴿إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ﴾ **You alone we worship.** Meaning, in other words, I worship You alone O my Lord with all these elements; with my love for you as implied in **"Praise be to Allāh the Lord of all beings"**, in anticipation of Your mercy as indicated in the phrase: **"The Most Gracious, the Most Merciful"**, and out of fear of your punishment, as evident in the phrase: **"Owner of the Day of Reckoning"**.

For an act of worship to be approved of by Allāh it must fulfil two conditions:

1- Sincerity to Allāh, the object of worship. Allāh (ﷻ) approves of no act of worship except when done exclusively for His sake. He says,

﴿وَمَآ أُمِرُوٓا۟ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُوا۟ ٱللَّهَ مُخْلِصِينَ لَهُ ٱلدِّينَ﴾.

And they were ordered nothing except to worship Allāh, keeping religion exclusively for Him. (al-Bayyinah: 5).

﴿أَلَا لِلَّهِ ٱلدِّينُ ٱلْخَالِصُ﴾.

Surely, the pure religion is for Allāh alone. (al-Zumar: 3).

﴿قُلِ ٱللَّهَ أَعْبُدُ مُخْلِصًا لَّهُۥ دِينِى﴾.

Say, "Allāh alone I do worship, sincere to Him in my religion". (al-Zumar: 14).

2- Following in the footsteps of the Prophet (ﷺ); no act is acceptable to Allāh unless it conforms to the teachings of His Messenger (ﷺ). Allāh (ﷻ) has said,

﴿وَمَآ ءَاتَىٰكُمُ ٱلرَّسُولُ فَخُذُوهُ وَمَا نَهَىٰكُمْ عَنْهُ فَٱنتَهُوا۟﴾.

And whatever the Messenger gives you, take it. And whatever he forbids for you, abstain [from it]. (al-Ḥashr: 7).

﴿فَلَا وَرَبِّكَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ حَتَّىٰ يُحَكِّمُوكَ فِيمَا شَجَرَ بَيْنَهُمْ ثُمَّ لَا يَجِدُوا۟ فِىٓ أَنفُسِهِمْ حَرَجًا مِّمَّا قَضَيْتَ وَيُسَلِّمُوا۟ تَسْلِيمًا﴾.

But no, by your Lord, they can have no Faith until they make you [i.e. Muḥammad] judge of what is in dispute between them, and find thereupon, within themselves, no discomfort from your verdict, but accept [such] with full submission. (al-Nisā': 65).

And in the words of the Prophet (ﷺ) himself;

(من أحدث في أمرنا هذا ما ليس منه فهو ردّ).

"Whoever introduces into this religion of ours something alien to it, such an invention will be rejected". (i.e. it is inadmissible). (*Bukhārī*: 2697).

Based on that, any act of worship that is void of either sincerity to Allāh or compliance with the *Sunnah* of the Prophet (ﷺ) is meaningless. A renowned Muslim scholar, Fuḍail bin 'Iyāḍ -may Allāh have mercy on him- remarked, with reference to Almighty Allāh's saying,

﴿لِيَبْلُوَكُمْ أَيُّكُمْ أَحْسَنُ عَمَلًا﴾.

That He may try you, which of you is best in deed. (Hūd: 7, al-Mulk: 2), "That is the most sincere and most correct deed". It was said to him: O Abu 'Ali, which act is the most sincere and most unerring? He replied, "A sincere but incorrect act is unacceptable to Allāh, just as no accurate act would be approved of by Him unless its probity is proven. A sincere act is that which has been done for the sake of Allāh, and the correct act is the one performed in accordance with the *Sunnah* of His Prophet (ﷺ)[1]".

Qur'ānic verses containing evidence on the above mentioned conditions include the word of Allāh in the close of *sūrah al-Kahf* (Chapter 18 of the Glorious Qur'ān) which reads as follows:

﴿قُلْ إِنَّمَا أَنَا بَشَرٌ مِّثْلُكُمْ يُوحَىٰ إِلَيَّ أَنَّمَا إِلَٰهُكُمْ إِلَٰهٌ وَاحِدٌ فَمَن كَانَ يَرْجُوا لِقَاءَ رَبِّهِ فَلْيَعْمَلْ عَمَلًا صَالِحًا وَلَا يُشْرِكْ بِعِبَادَةِ رَبِّهِ أَحَدًا﴾.

Say [O Muḥammad], "I am only a human being like you, to whom has been revealed that your God is one God. Therefore, whoever hopes for the meeting with his Lord, let him do righteous deeds and not associate in the worship of his Lord [Allāh] anyone". (al-Kahf: 110).

1- *Ḥilyat al-Awliyā'* vol. viii p. 95.

2.2.2 Forms of worship

Worship (*'Ibādah*) is of numerous types. Any righteous deed or utterance whether manifest or concealed is regarded as a branch of worship, provided that such is loved and assented to by Allāh (ﷻ). We shall now mention some examples as follows:

1- **Supplication (*Du'ā'*).** Allāh (ﷻ) says,

﴿فَادْعُوا اللَّهَ مُخْلِصِينَ لَهُ الدِّينَ﴾.

Therefore, supplicate Allāh, making the religion pure for Him. (al-Ghāfir: 14).

﴿وَأَنَّ الْمَسَاجِدَ لِلَّهِ فَلَا تَدْعُوا مَعَ اللَّهِ أَحَدًا﴾.

And the mosques are only for Allāh, none should you, therefore, invoke along with Him. (al-Jinn: 18).

﴿وَمَنْ أَضَلُّ مِمَّن يَدْعُوا مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ مَن لَّا يَسْتَجِيبُ لَهُ إِلَىٰ يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ وَهُمْ عَن دُعَائِهِمْ غَافِلُونَ ۝٥ وَإِذَا حُشِرَ النَّاسُ كَانُوا لَهُمْ أَعْدَاءً وَكَانُوا بِعِبَادَتِهِمْ كَافِرِينَ﴾.

And who is more astray than he who invokes, instead of Allāh, such that will not answer him until the Day of Resurrection, and are [even] unaware of their invocation. And when [on the Day of Reckoning] the people are gathered, they will become enemies to them and deny having been worshipped by them. (al-Aḥqāf: 5-6).

Whoever invokes a living or non-living being, other than Allāh, asking him/it to provide something that none but Allāh, alone, could provide has become a disbelieving polytheist. Asking a living fellow human being to render a service he/she is capable of rendering is, however, a blameless act. Such as saying to him/her, 'Give me something to eat or to drink', etc. It must be added that, even such a permissible request may not be directed to a dead or an absent

creature, who are not in a position to provide anything for anyone; hence, invoking them makes one a polytheist.

There are two types of supplication (*du'ā'*), namely *Du'ā' al-Mas'alah* and *Du'ā' al-'Ibādah*. The former is a supplication made to request for a terrestrial or celestial benefit from Allāh, while the latter refers to supplication with mere intention of worshipping Allāh, and it involves any open or secret pious act. It is understandable that a worshipper usually asks Allāh, either by spoken word or silent expression, for his act of worship to be accepted, and for he to be rewarded for that.

Any Qur'ānic statement commanding us to make invocation [to Allāh]; forbidding us to invoke any other being; or praising those who invoke Him, refers to both types of invocation as mentioned above.

2, 3, 4- Love, Fear, and Hope are also acts of worship. As we have mentioned earlier, the three represent the basic elements of worship.

5- Reliance on something. This means, with regard to Allāh, entrusting Him faithfully with all matters through dependence on Him and putting one's trust in Him, without ignoring the pursuit of whatever means He has made lawful for attainment of benefits or prevention of damages. Allāh (ﷻ) says,

﴿وَعَلَى ٱللَّهِ فَتَوَكَّلُوٓا۟ إِن كُنتُم مُّؤْمِنِينَ﴾

And in Allāh you must put your trust if you are indeed believers. (al-Mā'idah: 23).

﴿وَمَن يَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى ٱللَّهِ فَهُوَ حَسْبُهُۥٓ﴾.

And whoever puts his trust in Allāh, He is sufficient for him. (al-Ṭalāq: 3).

6, 7, 8- Desire, Fright, and Reverence

Desire is a wish to have something you love, fright denotes a fear that culminates in flight from horrible things, while reverence indicates a feeling of humility and submissiveness to Allāh's sublimity, which makes one submit voluntarily to both His general and specific pre-ordainments[1]. A saying of Allāh (ﷻ) stating all these three forms of worship goes thus:

﴿إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا۟ يُسَٰرِعُونَ فِى ٱلْخَيْرَٰتِ وَيَدْعُونَنَا رَغَبًا وَرَهَبًا ۖ وَكَانُوا۟ لَنَا خَٰشِعِينَ﴾.

They used to hasten to do good deeds, even as they invoke Us with desire and fear, and were submissive to Us. (al-Anbiyā': 90)

9- **Anxiety.** This is a feeling of nervousness resulting from one's knowledge of the majesty and absolute authority of whom he fears. Allāh (ﷻ) says,

﴿فَلَا تَخْشَوْهُمْ وَٱخْشَوْنِى﴾.

So fear them not, but fear Me. (al-Baqarah: 150; al- Mā'idah: 3).

10- Turning to Allāh in repentance; by being obedient to Him and avoiding acts of disobedience. Allāh (ﷻ) has said,

1- Allāh's pre-ordainment is of two types, namely *Kawni and Shar'i*. The former is general affecting all His creatures, while the latter is specific as it concerns only what Allāh approves of or assents to. (Translator)

﴿ وَأَنِيبُوٓاْ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكُمْ وَأَسْلِمُواْ لَهُۥ ﴾.

And to your Lord you should turn repentant, and submit. (al-Zumar: 54).

11- Seeking Allāh's help in any attempt to achieve religious or worldly benefits. Allāh (ﷻ) says,

﴿ إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ ﴾.

You (Allāh) alone we worship and You alone we ask for help. (al-Fātiḥah: 5). The Prophet (ﷺ) also said in his advice for Ibn 'Abbās, [His cousin]:

(إذا استعنت فاستعن بالله).

"When you ask for help, ask none but Allāh". (*Sunan al-Tirmidhi*: 2516; *Musnad Aḥmad* vol. I p. 307)[1].

12- To take refuge in something or, in other words, seek protection from a misfortune. Allāh (ﷻ) says,

﴿ قُلْ أَعُوذُ بِرَبِّ ٱلْفَلَقِ ۝١ مِن شَرِّ مَا خَلَقَ ﴾.

Say, "I seek refuge in the Lord of Daybreak. From the evil of that which He created". (al-Falaq: 1-2)

﴿ قُلْ أَعُوذُ بِرَبِّ ٱلنَّاسِ ۝١ مَلِكِ ٱلنَّاسِ ۝٢ إِلَٰهِ ٱلنَّاسِ ۝٣ مِن شَرِّ ٱلْوَسْوَاسِ ٱلْخَنَّاسِ ﴾.

Say, "I seek refuge in the Lord of mankind. The King of mankind. The God of mankind. From the evil of the sneaking whisperer". (al-Nās: 1-4).

13- Calling for help in order to be salvaged from hardship or destruction. Allāh (ﷻ) says,

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1- This is a *ḥasan* (fairly sound) *ḥadīth*, according to Tirmidhi, but *ṣaḥīḥ* (authentic) in the opinion of al-Ḥākim.

﴿إِذْ تَسْتَغِيثُونَ رَبَّكُمْ فَٱسْتَجَابَ لَكُمْ﴾.

When you sought help of your Lord and He answered you. (al-Anfāl: 9).

14- Slaughtering of animals in a particular way with the intention of pleasing Allāh. Some Qur'ānic verses go thus:

﴿قُلْ إِنَّ صَلَاتِى وَنُسُكِى وَمَحْيَاىَ وَمَمَاتِى لِلَّهِ رَبِّ ٱلْعَٰلَمِينَ﴾.

Say, "My *Ṣalāh* (Prayer), my animal sacrifices, my living and my dying are indeed for Allāh, Lord of the worlds". (al-An'ām: 162).

﴿فَصَلِّ لِرَبِّكَ وَٱنْحَرْ﴾.

Perform Ṣalāh (Prayer) for your Lord and sacrifice [an animal]. (al-Kawthar: 2).

15- Vow. This means deliberate imposition of an act or a non-obligatory religious observance on oneself. Allāh (ﷻ) says,

﴿يُوفُونَ بِٱلنَّذْرِ وَيَخَافُونَ يَوْمًا كَانَ شَرُّهُۥ مُسْتَطِيرًا﴾.

They [are those who] fulfil [their] vow and fear a day whose evil will be widespread. (al-Insān: 7).

The foregoing are just examples of the acts of worship, which are all exclusive possessions of Allāh (ﷻ) alone, and should not be devoted to any other being.

Acts of worship, in terms of parts of the human body used in performing them, are divisible into three:

a) Acts relating to the heart, such as love, fear, hope, returning to Allāh in repentance, anxiety, fright, and putting one's trust in Allāh, etc.

b) Verbal acts, such as saying *'Alḥamdulillah'* (Praise be to Allāh), *'La ilāha illa Allāh'*, (There is no god worthy of worship save Allāh), *'Subḥān Allāh'* (Glorified be Allāh), or asking for Allāh's forgiveness, as well as recitation of the Glorious Qur'ān, supplication, etc.

c) Acts relating to the limbs. These include *Ṣalāh* (prayer), fasting, *Zakāh* (obligatory alms), pilgrimage, charity, fighting in the cause of Allāh, etc.

2.3 The Prophet's (ﷺ) safeguarding of *Tawḥīd*

The Prophet (ﷺ), out of concern for his followers, was very keen to see them a strong and well fortified nation, who would fulfil the obligation of *Tawḥīd* and steer clear of any means or cause that could lead to the opposite. Allāh (ﷻ) says,

﴿لَقَدْ جَاءَكُمْ رَسُولٌ مِّنْ أَنفُسِكُمْ عَزِيزٌ عَلَيْهِ مَا عَنِتُّمْ حَرِيصٌ عَلَيْكُم بِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ رَءُوفٌ رَّحِيمٌ﴾

There has come to you a Messenger from among yourselves. It grieves him to see you undergo any difficulty. He is full of concern for you, and to the believers full of compassion and mercy. (al-Tawbah: 128).

The Prophet (ﷺ) went to great lengths in forbidding polytheism. He cautioned and forewarned the people, reiterating this from time to time, both in specific and in generic terms. He meant to protect the religion he had been sent with, the true and simple faith, the religion of Ibrahim[1], from any word or action that is capable of tarnishing this faith, causing it thereby to fall into decline or fade out. All this is duly evidenced in his *Sunnah* (ﷺ). Hence, he has firmly established the proof, wiped out obscurity and clearly displayed the right path, leaving no room for excuse.

The following themes will throw more light on how the Prophet (ﷺ) has actually safeguarded *Tawḥīd* (monotheism) and blocked any course leading to either polytheism or falsehood.

1- Islam, at times, is called '*Millat Ibrāhīm*' (The religion or faith of Ibrāhīm), in reference to Prophet Ibrāhīm (عليه السلام), the great grandfather of our Prophet, Muḥammad (ﷺ), who was himself a Muslim. (Translator)

2.3.1 Al-Ruqā

a) Meaning

Ruqā in the Arabic language is the plural form of *'ruqyah'*, which means a therapeutic treatment involving both recitation and spitting. This recitation may be from the Glorious Qur'ān or of the Prophet's supplications.

b) Rule

Ruqyah, in Islam, is a permissible act. The proofs of this include a narration by 'Awf bin Malik (ﷺ) who said, "During the *Jahiliyyah* (Pre-Islamic) period we used to apply *Ruqyah*. We therefore asked the Prophet (ﷺ) of his view concerning this practice and he said,

(اعرضوا عليَّ رقاكم، لا بأس بالرقى ما لم يكن فيه شرك).

'May I see the type of *Ruqā* you use [first before I give my verdict], for there is nothing wrong in using spells as long as they are free from [elements or traces] of polytheism'." (*Muslim*: 2200).

Another narration by Anas bin Mālik (ﷺ) has it that,

(رخَّص رسول الله ﷺ في الرقية من العين، والحمة، والنملة).

"The Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) sanctioned the use of *ruqyah* to rescue a victim of an evil eye, and of a bite, as well as *namlah*[1]". (*Muslim*: 2196).

In another *ḥadīth* narrated by Jābir bin 'Abdullah (رضي الله عنهما) the Prophet (ﷺ) said,

1- *Namlah* is a sore usually found on one or both sides of a person.

(مَن استطاع أن ينفع أخاه فليفعل).

"Whoever is able to do his brother a favour, let him do so". (*Muslīm*: 2199).

'Āishah (رضـي الله عنـها) has also narrated saying, "Each time any of us complained [of an illness], Allāh's Messenger would wipe his body with his right hand and then say,

(أذهِب الباس ربَّ الناس واشف أنت الشافي لا شفاء إلاَّ شفاؤك شفاء لا يُغادر سقماً).

'O Lord of mankind! Remove this pain and heal (the victim). You are the Healer. There is no [real] healing save Yours; such a healing that leaves behind no sickness'." (*Bukhari*: 5743; *Muslim*: 2191).

c) Conditions.

There are three conditions for the use of '*ruqyah*' in Islam, they are:

1- A '*ruqyah*' must not be seen as self-efficacious; otherwise, using it would become a forbidden act, and even an act of *Shirk*. The user must, therefore, see it as an ordinary measure whose efficacy depends solely on Almighty Allāh's sanction.

2- It must be free from anything inconsistent with the rules of Islam. Thus, a *ruqyah* that involves calling upon any other being besides Allāh, or seeking the help of *jinn, etc.* is not only prohibited, but also amounts to polytheistic act.

3- The *ruqyah* must be made up of unambiguous and known words; hence, any *ruqyah* consisting of talismans or magical words is forbidden.

Imam Mālik (رحمه الله) was once asked the following question: "Can a man apply *'ruqyah'* or have it applied on him"? He answered: "Doing so is not unlawful, provided the *ruqyah* is of good words".

d) Unlawful *Ruqyah*

Any *ruqyah* that lacks the above-mentioned conditions is unlawful. Such as when the user or the person for whom the *ruqyah* is being used believes in its self-efficacy, or the *ruqyah* itself consists of polytheistic or *'bid'ah'*[1] expressions; or involves taking something as an intermediary in a manner that could lead to *kufr* (disbelief). Furthermore, a *ruqyah* that is formed of ambiguous words also belongs to this category.

1- Any newly invented word or deed believed to be an act of worship without a proof backing it from either the Glorious Qur'ān or the *Sunnah* is condemned as a *bid'ah* (unlawful innovation or heresy), from an Islamic point of view. (Translator)

2.3.2 Amulets (*Al-Tamāim*)

a) Definition: *Tamāim*, being the plural form of "*tamīmah*", are charms, bones, etc. usually worn or carried with a belief that they will bring one good luck or protect him from evil. Arabs in the pre-Islamic era used to put such things on their children, and allege falsely that they could protect them from evil eyes.

b) Rule: Using amulets is prohibited, and not only that, it even constitutes an act of *'Shirk'*; as it amounts to a sort of spiritual attachment to a created being. None but Allāh, alone, repels unwanted damages, and such must be sought only through Him, His names and His attributes.

According to Ibn Mas'ūd (ﷺ), Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said,

(إنّ الرقى، والتمائم، والتولة شرك).

"Spells, amulets and *tiwalah*[1] are all acts of *'Shirk'*." (*Sunan Abū Dawūd*: 3883; al-*Mustadrak* by al-Ḥākim vol. iv p. 241[2]).

Another Companion, 'Abdullah bin 'Ukaim (ﷺ) also quoted the Prophet (ﷺ) as saying,

(من تعلّق شيئاً وكل إليه).

"Whoever wears something [believed to have magical powers] will be left forsaken in its custody". (*Musnad Aḥmad* vol. iv p. 310; *Sunan Tirmidhi*: 2072; al-*Mustadrak* vol. iv p. 241[3]).

'Uqbah bin 'Āmir similarly reported that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said,

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1- *Tiwalah* is a charm used in order to endear a wife to her husband and vice-versa. (Translator)

2- This is a *ṣaḥīḥ ḥadīth*, according to both al-Ḥākim and al-Dhahabi.

3- A *ṣaḥīḥ ḥadīth*, according to Ḥākim.

(من تعلّق تميمة فلا أتمّ الله له، ومن تعلّق ودَعة فلا ودع الله له).

"Whoever wears an amulet, may Allāh grant not his/her wish, and whoever hangs a *wada'ah*[1] may he/she not be relieved". (*Musnad Aḥmad vol. iv p. 154; Mustadrak al-Ḥākim vol. iv p. 240*[2]).

Also on the authority of 'Uqbah bin 'Āmir (ﷺ), Imam Aḥmad reported the saying of Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) that,

(من علّق تميمة فقد أشرك).

"Whoever wears an amulet has committed *Shirk*". (*Musnad* vol. iv p. 156[3]).

The above stated proofs and other similar ones warn against polytheistic incantations, a predominant feature of the *ruqā* used then by the Arabs. Elements of *Shirk* and spiritual attachment to a created being, found in those incantations, were responsible for their proscription.

c) Muslim scholars have different opinions on whether an amulet consisting of a portion of the Glorious Qur'ān may be used or not. Some of them are in favour of wearing amulets of this sort, while others disapprove of it. The latter view is, however, the correct one based on the following reasons:

1- *Wada'ah* is an object hung somewhere with a believe that it has some magical powers. (Translator)

2- This is a *ṣaḥīḥ* (sound or authentic) *ḥadīth* according to both Ḥākim and Dhahabi.

3- A *ṣaḥīḥ ḥadīth*, according to Ḥākim in *al-Mustadrak* vol. iv p. 244. Furthermore, in the opinion of 'Abdul Raḥmān bin Ḥasan, its narrators are *thiqāt* (trustworthy).

1- The prohibition of using amulets in Islamic texts is a general rule, excluding no form of it.

2- The principle of *Saddu al-Dharī'ah* (Precautionary measures) in Islam also supports this view, as allowing such an amulet to be used may pave the way for using other amulets containing no portion of the Qur'ān.

3- Wearing an amulet of this kind will no doubt, expose the Glorious Book to dishonour, as one would have to wear it even in lavatories and the like.

4- Using the Glorious Qur'ān as a therapeutic measure has a clearly defined method, and that is to recite part of it on a sick person; hence, no additional method should be invented.

2.3.3 Wearing any ring-like object (*ḥalaqah*), string or any other similar object believed to have magical or therapeutic effect

a) Arabs before Islam used to wear or hang these objects, and believed they have magical powers to bring them some benefit, ward off dangers, or protect them from evil eyes. Allāh (ﷻ) says,

﴿قُلْ أَفَرَءَيْتُم مَّا تَدْعُونَ مِن دُونِ ٱللَّهِ إِنْ أَرَادَنِىَ ٱللَّهُ بِضُرٍّ هَلْ هُنَّ كَٰشِفَٰتُ ضُرِّهِۦٓ أَوْ أَرَادَنِى بِرَحْمَةٍ هَلْ هُنَّ مُمْسِكَٰتُ رَحْمَتِهِۦ ۚ قُلْ حَسْبِىَ ٱللَّهُ ۖ عَلَيْهِ يَتَوَكَّلُ ٱلْمُتَوَكِّلُونَ﴾.

Say, "Then, have you considered what you invoke besides Allāh? If Allāh intended for me any harm, are they removers of His harm; or if He intended for me some mercy, are they withholders of His Mercy"? Say, "Sufficient for me is Allāh, upon Him [alone] rely the [wise] reliers". (al-Zumar: 38).

﴿قُلِ ٱدْعُوا۟ ٱلَّذِينَ زَعَمْتُم مِّن دُونِهِۦ فَلَا يَمْلِكُونَ كَشْفَ ٱلضُّرِّ عَنكُمْ وَلَا تَحْوِيلًا﴾.

Say, "Call upon those you have claimed [to be gods] besides Him. They have neither the ability to rid you of adversity nor to transfer it [to someone else]". (Al-Isrā': 56).

According to a narration by 'Imrān bin al-Ḥuṣain (ﷺ), the Prophet (ﷺ), having cast his eyes on a man with a brass ring on his finger, asked him, **"What is this [for]"?** The man answered, 'I have worn it because of *wāhinah*[1]'. Then, the Prophet (ﷺ) said,

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1- *Al-Wāhinah*, according to Ibn al-Athīr (*al-Nihāyah* vol. v p. 203), is an illness that usually affects the upper arm, shoulder, or the whole hand of a person. (Translator)

(انــزعها؛ فإنّها لا تزيدك إلاّ وهناً، انبذها عنك، فإنّك لو متّ وهي عليك مــا أفلحــتَ أبداً).

"Take it off, for it will only increase your weakness! Throw it away, for if you were to die while it remained on you, you would never prosper[1]". (*Musnad Aḥmad* vol. iv p. 445[2]).

In a related incident, Ḥudhaifah bin al-Yamān (ﷺ) saw a man who had a piece of string on his hand for protection against fever. Ḥudhaifah reacted by cutting the string, and recited the following Qur'ānic verse:

﴿ وَمَا يُؤْمِنُ أَكْثَرُهُم بِاللَّهِ إِلَّا وَهُم مُّشْرِكُونَ ﴾.

And most of them believe not in Allāh except that they [still] associate partners with Him. (Yūsuf: 106).

b) Rule:

The mere use of a ring or string and the like with a belief that they possess magical powers is a forbidden act (*ḥarām*), which may even transform to an act of *Shirk*, should the user believe in their self-efficacy without Allāh's intervention. Such an act amounts to a major infringement of *Tawḥīd al-Rubūbiyyah* (Believing in the Oneness of Lordship), as it indicates a belief in the existence of a rival to Allāh (ﷻ) in His creation and administration of the universe. Exalted is He above all what they claim for Him as associates.

1- i.e. you will not be safe from Allāh's wrath and punishment. (Translator)

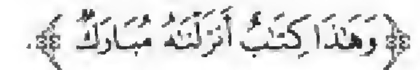
2- The *Isnād* (chain of transmission) of this *ḥadīth* is *ḥasan*, said al-Būṣairi. And according to al-Haithami, the narrators are reliable.

On the other hand, if the user, having believed in the unity of Allāh and His control of all affairs, takes his wearing a ring or string as an ordinary non self-efficacious means, then his act qualifies still as a minor *shirk* on the grounds of adopting an unlawful means, and heeding to that with his heart. Furthermore, this could lead him into committing major *shirk*, especially if he becomes psychologically attached to the use of a ring or string, and thinks they could bring him a benefit or save him from calamity.

2.3.4 Seeking the blessings (*Al-Tabarruk*) of trees, stones, etc.

Al-Tabarruk, or seeking the blessings of something usually takes one of the two following courses:

1- *Al-Tabarruk* with a known Islamic source of blessing, like the Glorious Book of Allāh. Allāh (ﷻ) has said,



And this [the Qur'ān] is a blessed Book, which We have revealed. (al-An'ām: 92, 155). The blessings of the Glorious Qur'ān include the guidance it has for the human hearts, the remedy to the diseases of their breasts, as well as its reformation of their souls, and setting their characters right, etc.

2- *Al-Tabarruk* with an unlawful means. This includes seeking the blessing of trees, stones, graves, domes, shrines etc., and it is an act of *Shirk*.

A narration by Abu Wāqid al-Laithi (رضي الله عنه) goes thus: "We set out to *Ḥunain* [on a military campaign] with Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) by the time we had just left disbelief [and embraced Islam]. The then polytheists had a lotus tree called '*Dhāt anwāṭ*', which they would stick to and hang their arms on. As we were passing by a lotus tree, we asked Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ), "Would you give us a '*dhāt anwāṭ*' similar to that of the disbelievers"? The Prophet (ﷺ) proclaimed,

(الله أكبر، إنّها السنن، قلتم والذي نفسي بيده كما قالت بنو إسرائيل لموسى: ﴿ٱجْعَل لَّنَآ إِلَٰهًا كَمَا لَهُمْ ءَالِهَةٌ ۚ قَالَ إِنَّكُمْ قَوْمٌ تَجْهَلُونَ﴾ (الأعراف: ١٣٨)، لتركبنّ سنن من كان قبلكم).

"Allāhu Akbar!, This indeed, is the way [people are destined to behave]. By He (Allāh) in whose Hand is my soul, you have said this, just as the Children of Israel had said to Mūsa before:

Make for us a god just as they have gods. He [Mūsa] said, "Indeed, you are a people behaving ignorantly". (al-A'rāf: 138).

Definitely, you would follow the paths of those before you. (*Tirmidhi*: 2180[1]).

It is obvious from this *ḥadīth* that the practices of those who idolise trees, graves, stones and the like, either by seeking their blessings, being devoted to them, or offering animal sacrifices to them, are all acts of *Shirk*. On this basis, their request was described in the *ḥadīth* as a replica of another request made in the past by the Children of Israel who had said to their Prophet, "Make for us a god just as they have gods". These people demanded to have a lotus tree and seek blessings thereof in the same manner as the polytheists usually do, while the Children of Israel asked for a god just as others also had their own gods. Both requests are in conflict with the notion of *Tawḥīd* (monotheism); seeking the blessings of a tree is a form of *Shirk*, while choosing another god besides Allāh is crystal-clear *Shirk*.

The Prophet's saying, **"Definitely, you would follow the paths of those before you"**, as quoted above, is an indication that something of that nature will happen in his nation, and he has said that to forbid such an act and forewarn against it.

1- A *ṣaḥīḥ ḥadīth*, according to the narrator (Tirmidhi) himself.

2.3.5 Some forbidden acts concerning the graves

In a move to safeguard and preserve the faith at the advent of Islam, Muslims, who, not long ago were living in sheer ignorance, were barred from visiting the graves. Later, such a visit was declared permissible, even though with clearly defined goals. This development came in recognition of the fact that the Muslims, by then, had become stronger in their belief, just as the Islamic faith itself has gained momentous ground among the people. Moreover, the evidence of *Tawḥīd* has become apparent, while on the other hand, weaknesses of counter fallacious argument have also been uncovered.

Buraidah bin al-Ḥuṣaib (ﷺ) narrated that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said,

(نهيتكم عن زيارة القبور، فزوروها).

"I used to forbid you to visit the graves, but you may now visit them". (*Muslim*: 977).

He also said, in another *ḥadīth* reported by Abū Ḥurairah (ﷺ),

(زوروا القبور فإنها تُذكّر الموت).

"Visit the graves, for that would remind you of death". (*Muslim*: 975).

Abu Sa'īd al-Khudri (ﷺ) also narrated that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said,

(إنّي نهيتكم عن زيارة القبور فزوروها، فإنّ فيها عبرة).

"I have in the past, forbidden you to visit the graves. But now you should visit them, for there is a lesson for you in doing so". (*Musnad Aḥmad vol. iii, p. 38; Mustadrak al-Ḥākim* vol. 1 p. 531).

In another *ḥadīth* narrated by Anas bin Mālik (ﷺ), Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) also said,

(كنت نهيتكم عن زيارة القبور ألا فزوروها؛ فإنها ترق القلب وتدمع العين وتذكر الآخرة، ولا تقولوا هُجراً).

"I have in the past forbidden you to visit the graves. O! You should now visit them, as such a visit would soften your hearts, cause you to shed tears, and remind you of the hereafter. Nevertheless, you should never say '*hujr*' (any forbidden word)". (*Mustadrak al-Ḥākim* vol. 1 p. 532).

Buraidah (ﷺ) again reported that, "Allāh's Messenger used to teach his companions [what to say] whenever they visited a cemetery. One of them would say,

(السلام عليكم أهل الديار من المؤمنين والمسلمين، وإنّا إن شاء الله بكم لاحقون، أسأل الله لنا ولكم العافية).

"Peace be upon you the inhabitants of this land, from among the believers and the Muslims. With the will of Allāh, we shall surely join you. I beseech Allāh to give us and you too peace, forgiveness, wellbeing, etc". (*Muslim*: 975).

It is evident from the above-mentioned *ḥadīths* and others, that visiting the graves, after it had been prohibited, was later declared permissible for two major purposes. The first is to teach the people voluntary renunciation of worldly attractions through their remembrance of the life to come, death and human decomposition, in addition to learning from what befalls the deceased in their graves. All this would not only help increase one in faith and strengthen his conviction, but would also broaden his spiritual contact with Allāh and rid him of inadvertence and turning away from the truth.

The second objective for authorising such visits is to show kindness to the dead, through the supplication a visitor would make to Allāh to have mercy on them and forgive their sins.

What we have just mentioned in this regard is the only view supported by proofs. Thus, it is binding on whoever claims to have an opposing view to provide convincing and cogent evidence on his claim.

Moreover, for the purpose of preserving the tenets of *Tawḥīd*, the *Sunnah* has spoken of many prohibitions in relation to either the graves or the visit to them. Every Muslim ought to learn about this, to save himself from falsehood and religious aberration. We shall now talk on some of those prohibited acts as follows:

i) Saying '*Hujr*' during the visits to graveyards

It has been mentioned above that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) cautioned against saying '*hujr*' during any visit to graveyards. '*Hujr*' is an Arabic word standing for whatever is unlawful in Islam, the worst of which is to associate a partner with Allāh, by calling on the dead instead of Allāh, for help or good health. This is an open act of *Shirk* and a plain disbelief. Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) has also declared in clear terms in many *hadiths* of his that such acts are unlawful, and cursed whoever engages in any of them.

Imam Muslim, the renowned scholar of *Ḥadīth*, reported on the authority of Jundub bin 'Abdullah (ﷺ), that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said just five days before his death,

(ألا إنّ من كان قبلكم كانوا يتّخذون قبور أنبيائهم وصالحيهم مساجد، ألا فلا تتّخذوا القبور مساجد إني أنهاكم عن ذلك).

"Indeed, those who came before you used to take the graves of their Prophets and the righteous among them as places of worship. You should not use the graves as places of worship (i.e. mosques), I am indeed forbidding that for you". (*Muslim*: 532).

It is, thus, major *Shirk* to call on a dead person for help or offer an act of worship to him. It is also an atrocious innovation to either devote oneself to the graves, or pursue therein answer to one's supplication, as well as to perform prayer (*ṣalāh*) in a mosque that has graves within it.

'Aishah (رضي الله عنها) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said during his last illness,

(لعن الله اليهود والنصارى اتّخذوا قبور أنبيائهم مساجد).

"May Allāh curse the Jews and the Christians, for they have used the graves of their Prophets as places of worship". (*Bukhāri*: 1330; *Muslim*: 531).

ii) Slaughtering at a cemetery

This is counted as an act of major *Shirk*, provided that the intention is to please the dead, with the hope that they may come to one's aid. Doing so for any other purpose apart from what has been mentioned also amounts to a very risky innovation that could lead to *Shirk*. The Prophet (ﷺ) has said, **"*Aqr* is not Islamic".** In his explanation of *'Aqr'* mentioned in the *ḥadīth*, a sub-narrator, 'Abd al-Razzāq [al-Ṣan'āni] said, "They used to slaughter cows or sheep at graveyards". (*Sunan Abu Dawūd*: 3222).

iii- vii) Raising the surface of a grave by adding more to the originally extracted soil; plastering the grave; inscribing names etc. on it; constructing a building on it; and sitting on it.

All of the aforementioned are part of the innovations that led the Jews and the Christians astray, and were major causes of *Shirk*. Jabir (ﷺ) reported saying,

(نهى رسول الله ﷺ أن يُجصَّص القبر، وأن يُقعد عليه، وأن يُبنى عليه، وأن يُزاد عليه، أو يُكتب عليه).

"Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) forbade the plastering of the graves, sitting on them, erecting buildings on them, adding another soil to their soil, and inscribing anything on them". (*Muslim*: 970 ; *Sunan Abu Dawūd*: 3225 and 3226; *Mustadrak al-Ḥākim* vol. i p. 525).

viii) Praying in the direction of graves, or performing the prayers in graveyards

According to Abu Murthid al-Ghanawi (ﷺ), the Prophet (ﷺ) said,

(لا تصلُّوا إلى القبور، ولا تجلسوا عليها).

"Do not pray in the direction of graves, and do not sit on them". (*Muslim*: 972).

Another *ḥadīth* of the Prophet (ﷺ), reported on the authority of Abu Sa'īd al-Khudri (ﷺ), goes thus:

(الأرض كلُّها مسجد، إلاّ المقبرة والحمام).

"The earth as a whole is suitable to be used as a mosque, except for cemeteries and lavatories". (*Sunan Abu Dawūd*: 492, *Sunan al-Tirmidhi*: 317[1]).

1- A *ṣaḥīḥ* (sound or authentic) *ḥadīth*, according to both al-Ḥākim and al-Dhahabi.

ix) Building mosques on the graves

This also is an innovation inherited from the Jews and Christians' aberrations. The *ḥadīth* in relation to this narrated by 'Aishah (رضي الله عنها) has been mentioned above, i.e. **"May Allāh curse the Jews and the Christians, for they have used the graves of their Prophets as places of worship".**

x) Frequent visits to graves or transforming such into a festivity

This is another innovation against which there is downright prohibition, considering the gravity of its damage. Abu Hurairah (ﷺ) reported that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said,

(لا تتّخذوا قبري عيداً، ولا تجعلوا بيوتكم قبوراً، وحيثما كنتم فصلّوا عليَّ، فإنّ صلاتكم تبلغني).

"Do not use my grave as a festival[1], and do not cause your houses to become graves. Ask for the blessings of Allāh to be upon me wherever you may be, for that will surely reach me". (*Sunan Abu Dāwūd*: 2042; *Musnad Aḥmad* vol. ii, p. 367).

1- *'Īd* or festival is something that reoccurs repeatedly, such as the Feast of Breaking the Ramaḍan Fast (*'Īd al-fiṭr*), or the Major Feast (*'Īd al-aḍḥā*). Paying frequent visits to the Prophet's grave on a daily basis with the aim of greeting him is more or less a way of transforming the scene into a festival. The Prophet (ﷺ) has, therefore, forbidden this and ordered that Muslims should offer their invocation for Allāh's Mercy and Blessings to be on him wherever they are. He also added that some angels have been charged by Allāh with the duty of conveying such salutations to him. This itself is another manifestation of the simplicity of this religion, as it is not feasible for every Muslim to be physically present in the city of the Prophet (ﷺ).

xi) To set out on a journey purposely to visit a grave.

This also is a forbidden act, being a channel of *shirk*. It occurs in a narration by Abu Hurairah (ﷺ) that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said,

(لا تُشَدُّ الرِّحال إلاَّ إلى ثلاثة مساجد: المسجد الحرام، ومسجد الرسول ﷺ، ومسجد الأقصى).

"No one should start out on a journey to visit a particular place save three mosques. The Sacred Mosque in Makkah, the mosque of Allāh's Messenger and the *Aqṣā* (Jerusalem) mosque". (*Bukhari*: 1189; *Muslim*: 1397).

2.3.6 Al-Tawassul

a) Definition:

Linguistically, The word "*Tawassul*" is derived from another Arabic word "*wasīlat*", that is, means, measure, medium, etc. "*Al-wasīlat*" (الوسيلة) and "*al-waṣīlat*" (الوصيلة) have almost the same meaning; hence, "*al-Tawassul*" denotes seeking to attain one's aim and the effort made for its achievement.

Al-Tawassul, in a less broad Islamic definition, is seeking the attainment of Allāh's pleasure and His Paradise, by doing what He has ordained and abstaining from what He has forbidden.

b) "*Al-Wasīlat*" in the Qur'ānic context:

This word occurred twice in the whole of the Glorious Qur'ān. The first place is where Allāh (ﷻ) says,

﴿ يَـٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا۟ ٱتَّقُوا۟ ٱللَّهَ وَٱبْتَغُوٓا۟ إِلَيْهِ ٱلْوَسِيلَةَ وَجَـٰهِدُوا۟ فِى سَبِيلِهِۦ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ ﴾.

O you who believe! Fear Allāh and seek the means [of approach] to Him. And strive in His cause, that you may succeed. (al- Mā'idah: 35).

In the other place, Allāh (ﷻ) says,

﴿ أُو۟لَـٰٓئِكَ ٱلَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ يَبْتَغُونَ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِمُ ٱلْوَسِيلَةَ أَيُّهُمْ أَقْرَبُ وَيَرْجُونَ رَحْمَتَهُۥ وَيَخَافُونَ عَذَابَهُۥٓ ۚ إِنَّ عَذَابَ رَبِّكَ كَانَ مَحْذُورًا ﴾.

Those whom they call upon seek [themselves] the means [of approach] to their Lord, as to which of them would be nearest, and they hope for His Mercy and fear His punishment. Indeed, the punishment of your Lord is ever feared. (al-Isrā': 57).

The meaning of *al-wasīlat* in both verses is seeking nearness to Allāh by doing what He would assent to. Thus, we see al-Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Kathīr in his commentary on the first verse narrating from Ibn 'Abbās (رضي الله عنهما) and others like Mujahid, Abu Wāil, al-Ḥasan al-Baṣri, 'Abdullah bin Kathīr, al-Suddi and Ibn Zayd, who have all explained the word *al-wasīlat* in the verse to mean an attempt to get closer to Allāh (ﷻ)[1].

As for the second verse, as quoted above, a great Companion of the Prophet (ﷺ), 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd (ﷺ) has made known the circumstances surrounding its revelation, as well as its meaning. He said, "The verse was revealed in connection with the case of a group of Arabs who had been worshipping a group of *jinn*. Later, those *jinn* themselves embraced Islam, while their worshippers remained unaware". (*Bukhāri*: 4714; *Muslim*: 3030).

This is clear enough to establish that '*wasīlat*' is any righteous deed or lofty act of worship adopted as means of seeking Almighty Allāh's favour. And for this reason Allāh (ﷻ) has said,

﴿يَبْتَغُونَ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِمُ ٱلْوَسِيلَةَ﴾

"They seek the means of approach to their Lord". That is, they look for those pious acts that can be used as means to get nearer to Allāh, and, of course, to gain His pleasure.

c) Divisions of *Tawassul*: *Tawassul* has two types; lawful and unlawful.

1- Ibn Kathīr, *al-Tafsīr*, vol. ii p. 50.

i) The lawful *Tawassul* is to use a legitimate means to get closer to Allāh, and the proper way for knowing such is to consult the Glorious Book of Allāh and the *Sunnah* of His Prophet (ﷺ). Whatever means declared as lawful in both or any of them is thereby valid, while all other methods of approach should accordingly be seen as invalid.

This lawful *Tawassul* is itself subdivided into three types, namely:

1- Using any of Allāh's most beautiful names and attributes as a means of approach to Him. An example of this is when a Muslim says in his supplication, 'O Allāh, I ask You with Your being the Most Gracious and the Most Merciful, to make me healthy'. Or he says, 'I beseech You with Your mercy that encompasses all things, to forgive me and have mercy on me', etc.

The proof of the validity of this type comes in the body of the following Qur'ānic text:

﴿وَلِلَّهِ ٱلْأَسْمَآءُ ٱلْحُسْنَىٰ فَٱدْعُوهُ بِهَا﴾

"To Allāh belong the Most Beautiful Names: invoke Him by them". (al-A'rāf: 180).

2- Using the righteous deeds one has performed, as means of approach to Allāh. For instance, one may say, 'O Allāh, forgive me by virtue of my belief in You, my love for You and my following Your Messenger'. Or say, 'O Allāh, I beseech You to drive away my grief, in consideration of the love I have for your Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ), and my belief in his message'. The supplicant may also mention a considerable good deed he/she has performed, and use that to seek access to his Lord, as done by the three men of the cave, whose story we shall mention, later.

The proofs of the validity of this type include Allāh's (ﷻ) saying,

﴿ٱلَّذِينَ يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَآ إِنَّنَآ ءَامَنَّا فَٱغْفِرْ لَنَا ذُنُوبَنَا وَقِنَا عَذَابَ ٱلنَّارِ﴾.

Those who say, "Our Lord! We have indeed believed, so forgive us our sins and save us from the punishment of the Fire". (Āl-'Imrān: 16).

﴿رَبَّنَآ ءَامَنَّا بِمَآ أَنزَلْتَ وَٱتَّبَعْنَا ٱلرَّسُولَ فَٱكْتُبْنَا مَعَ ٱلشَّٰهِدِينَ﴾.

Our Lord! We believe in what You have revealed and follow Your Messenger, so list us among those who bear witness [to the truth]. (Āl- 'Imrān: 53).

The content of the story of the three men of the cave is another proof supporting the validity of this form of *Tawassul*. According to 'Abdullah bin 'Umar (رضي الله عنهما), Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said,

(بينما ثلاثة نفر مِمَّن كان قبلكم يمشون إذ أصابهم مطر، فأووا إلى غار فانطبق عليهم، فقال بعضُهم لبعض: إنّه والله يا هؤلاء لا يُنجيكم إلاّ الصدق، فليدعُ كلُّ رجلٍ منكم بما يعلم أنّه قد صدق فيه، فقال واحدٌ منهم: اللّهمّ إن كنتَ تعلم أنّه كان لي أجيرٌ عمل لي على فَرَقٍ من أرُزٍّ فذهب وتركه، وأنّي عمدتُ إلى ذلك الفرَق فزرعته، فصار من أمره أنّي اشتريتُ منه بقراً، وأنّه أتاني يطلبُ أجره، فقلتُ له: اعمد إلى تلك البقر فسُقها، فقال لي: إنّما لي عندك فرَق من أرُزٍّ، فقلتُ له: اعمد إلى تلك البقر، فإنّها من الفرق، فساقها، فإن كنتَ تعلم أنّي فعلتُ ذلك من خشيتك ففرِّج عنّا، فانساخت عنهم الصخرة، فقال الآخر: اللّهمّ إن كنتَ تعلم أنه كان لي أبوان شيخان كبيران، وكنتُ آتيهما كلَّ ليلة بلبن غنم لي، فأبطأتُ عليهما ليلة، فجئتُ وقد رقدا، وأهلي وعيالي يتضاغون من الجوع، فكنتُ لا أسقيهم حتى يشرب أبواي، فكرهتُ أن أوقظهما، وكرهتُ أن أدعهما فيستكنّا لشربتهما، فلم أزل أنتظر حتى طلع الفجر، فإن كنتَ تعلم أنّي فعلتُ ذلك من خشيتك ففرِّج عنّا، فانساخت عنهم الصخرة حتى نظروا إلى السماء، فقال الآخر: اللّهمّ إن كنتَ تعلم أنّه كانت لي ابنةُ عمٍّ من أحبِّ الناس إليّ، وأنّي راودتُها عن نفسها فأبت إلاّ أن آتيها بمائة

دينار، فطلبتُها حتى قدرتُ، فأتيتُها بها فدفعتُها إليها فأمكنتني من نفسها، فلمّا قعدتُ بين رجليها قالت: اتّق الله ولا تفضّ الخاتم إلاّ بحقّه، فقمتُ وتركتُ المائة دينار، فإن كنتَ تعلم أنّي فعلتُ ذلك من خشيتك ففرّج عنّا، ففرّج الله عنهم فخرجوا).

"Once, three men of the previous nations were walking, and it suddenly started to rain. They took shelter in a cave, the entrance of which got closed as they were inside. They said to each other, 'O you people, by Allāh! Nothing can rescue you from this but the truth, so let each one of you invoke [Allāh] by referring to such a deed which he knows he has done sincerely [for Him]'. One of them said, O Allāh! You know that I had a labourer who worked for me on the condition that I should give him a *faraq*[1] of rice. The labourer left and abandoned his wages, but I sowed the *faraq* of rice and with its yield I bought some cows. Later on, he came to me demanding his wages and I said to him: "Go to those cows and drive them away with you". He said, But I am only entitled to a *faraq* of rice. Then I asked him to take the cows, for they are all products of that *faraq*, and he drove them away [with him]. O Allāh! If what I have done is seen by You to be out of my fear of You, may You then open this cave for us. The rock [at the entrance of the cave] shifted a bit[2]. The other man then said, "O Allāh! You are aware that I had old parents whom I used to provide with the milk of my sheep every night. One night I had a

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1- A *Faraq* = 6516 grams. Qal'aji, Muhammad Rawwās, *Mu'jam Lughat al-Fuqahā'* (Dictionary of Islamic Legal Terms) pp. 312, 419. (Translator)

2- But the space was so small that they could not have come out through it. This clarification is found in a separate narration by Sālim.

delay, and came later but found them sleeping. My wife and children were already crying in hunger, but I used to delay their drinking from the milk until my parents had drunk first. I did not want to wake them up, but also disliked leaving them alone without drinking from the milk, otherwise, they might become weak. I kept waiting [for them] until daybreak. O Allāh! If what I have done is considered by You to be out of my fear of You, may You then open this cave for us. The rock once again shifted and they could then see the sky. The third man said, O Allāh, You know that I had a cousin (a daughter of my paternal uncle) whom I loved very much. I tried to seduce her but she refused to comply unless I paid her one hundred dinars. I sought the money and got it, and having brought the dinars to her she allowed me to sleep with her. As I was sitting between her legs (i.e. so close as to making love to her) she said, "Fear Allāh, and beware of opening the seal without the right to do so[1]". [On hearing this] I got up and left [for her] the hundred dinars. O Allāh! If what I have done is seen by You to be out of my fear of You, may You then open this cave for us. Thus, Allāh made the cave open, and they came out of it". (*Bukhari*: 3465).

3- Using a supplication made by a pious man or woman, whose supplication is expected to be answered, as a means of approach to

1- i.e. do not deflower me, for you have no legitimate right to do so; you are not my husband. (Translator)

Allāh. A Muslim may, for instance, request from such a righteous individual, known to be persistently obedient to Allāh (ﷻ), to supplicate Allāh on his behalf, for relief from certain distress or for comfort and well-being.

The fact that the Companions of the Prophet (ﷺ) used to ask him, whether privately or collectively, to supplicate Allāh on their behalf is a sufficient proof of the validity of this type of *Tawassul* . A narration by Anas bin Mālik (رضي الله عنه) goes thus:

(أنّ رجُلاً دخل يوم الجمعة من باب كان وجاه المنبر ورسول الله ﷺ قائمٌ يخطب، فاستقبل رسولَ الله ﷺ قائماً فقال: يا رسول الله هلكت المواشي وانقطعت السُّبل، فادع الله يُغيثنا، قال: فرفع رسول الله ﷺ يديه فقال: اللّهمَّ اسقنا، اللّهمَّ اسقنا، اللّهمَّ اسقنا، قال أنسٌ: ولا والله ما نرى في السماء من سحاب ولا قزعة ولا شيئاً، وما بيننا وبين سلع من بيت ولا دار، قال: فطلعت من ورائه سحابة مثل الترس، فلمّا توسّطت السماء انتشرت، ثم أمطرت، قال: والله ما رأينا الشمس ستًّا، ثم دخل رجل من ذلك الباب في الجمعة المقبلة -ورسول الله ﷺ قائم يخطب- فاستقبله قائماً فقال: يا رسول الله، هلكت الأموال، وانقطعت السُّبل، فادع الله يُمسكها، قال: فرفع رسول الله ﷺ يديه ثم قال: اللّهمَّ حوالينا ولا علينا، اللّهمَّ على الآكام والجبال والظِّراب ومنابت الشجر، قال: فانقطعت، وخرجنا نمشي في الشمس).

"On a Friday, a man entered [the Prophet's mosque] through a gate facing the pulpit, while Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) was standing delivering the *Khutbah* (Friday sermon). The man stood and faced the Prophet, then proclaimed: 'O Allāh's Messenger, the livestock are dying and the roads have been cut off! Invoke Allāh to bless us [with rain]'. The Prophet raised his hands and prayed, "O Allāh! Give us rain" (three times). By Allāh! There were no clouds at all in the sky that we could see, and there was no single building

between us and the mountain of *Sal'*[1]. A cloud like a shield appeared from behind the mountain, and, after reaching the middle of the sky, spread and then rained. By Allāh! We could not see the sun for a whole week. On the next Friday, a man also entered through the same gate, while the Prophet was also standing giving the sermon. The man stood facing the Prophet (ﷺ) and proclaimed, 'O Allāh's Messenger! Properties are being destroyed, and the roads are cut off. Invoke Allāh to stop the rain'. Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) raised his hands and supplicated, "O Allāh! [Send] the rain round about us and not on us. [May the rain be confined to] the plateaus, the mountains, the hills, and the tree trunks". It [suddenly] ceased to rain and we came out walking in the sun". Shuraik, a sub-narrarator of this *ḥadīth* said, 'I asked Anas whether this man was the same man who had entered the mosque the previous Friday'? Anas said, "I do not know". (*Bukhāri*: 1013, *Muslim*: 897).

In another *ḥadīth* reported also by both Bukhāri and Muslim, the Prophet (ﷺ), having said that some seventy thousand people among his followers will be admitted into Paradise without being called to account for any of their deeds, or being subjected to any form of punishment, described them as follows:

(هم الذين لا يسترقون ولا يكتوون ولا يتطيّرون وعلى ربهم يتوكّلون).

"They are those who neither request the use of *ruqyah* nor cauterize their body tissue for medicinal purposes, and neither do

1- *Sal'*, up till to day, is the name of a mountain in the city of Madinah. (Translator)

they believe in bad or good omen of birds. They rely only on their Lord". 'Ukāshah bin Miḥṣan stood up and said, O Messenger of Allāh! Ask Allāh to let me be one of them. The Prophet (ﷺ) said, **"You are one of them".** (*Bukhārī*: 5705; *Muslim*: 218).

In another *ḥadīth* of similar denotation, the Prophet (ﷺ) mentioned 'Uwais al-Qarni[1] and advised the audience to ask him to seek Allāh's forgiveness on their behalf.

This type of *Tawassul* is only applicable provided that the person we ask to supplicate for us is alive. It is forbidden to request such from a dead person who, in essence, has ceased to engage in any act.

1- This man has been described in another *ḥadīth* as a righteous man who will live in the generation of the *Tābi'īn* (Those who lived immediately after the Companions and have actually met some of them). (Translator)

ii) Forbidden *Tawassul*

That is using an invalid means, from an Islamic viewpoint, to seek access to Allāh (ﷻ). The forbidden *Tawassul* is of various types, which are also of varying degrees of unacceptability. They include:

1- *Tawassul* that involves calling on dead or unseen people for help, or to provide one's needs or dispel his worries. Doing so is an act of major *Shirk* and qualifies the perpetrator as a non-Muslim.

2- Seeking access to Allāh by worshipping at graveyards. Such as supplicating to Allāh there; building a mosque or the like on top of the graves; and placing lamps, mantles or veils around them, etc. Such acts are regarded as minor polytheism which is not only inconsistent with the perfection of *Tawḥīd*, but also leads to committing the major one.

3- Using the honour, prestige or lofty position of the Prophets and the righteous men and women as a means of approach to Allāh (ﷻ). This is a forbidden, nay innovated heresy, for Allāh has never sanctioned or approved of it. He says,

﴿ ءَآللَّهُ أَذِنَ لَكُمْ ﴾

Has Allāh permitted you [to do so]? (Yūnus: 59).

The honour or position of the righteous people in the sight of Allāh benefit only their holders. Allāh (ﷻ) has said,

﴿ وَأَن لَّيْسَ لِلْإِنسَٰنِ إِلَّا مَا سَعَىٰ ﴾

And that man has only that for which he makes effort. (al-Najm: 39). Using *Tawassul* in this way was therefore unknown during the time of the Prophet (ﷺ) and his Companions. Many Muslim scholars have

also unequivocally declared it forbidden. Abū Ḥanīfah[1] (رحمه الله) said, "It is blameworthy for a supplicant to say, 'I ask You (Allāh) with the honour or importance of so and so person, or that of Your *Awliyā'* (beloved ones among His creatures), Your Messengers, the Sacred House, or the *Mash'ar al-Ḥarām*[2]".

d) Refutation of [common] fallacious arguments concerning *Tawassul*

Perhaps the antagonists of *Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah* (The Orthodox Sunni Muslims who follow strictly the injunctions of the Qur'ān and the *Sunnah*) would cite some fallacious arguments or raise certain objections regarding the issue of *Tawassul*, either to sustain their erring conclusions or to give the laymen wrong impression of the genuineness of their stance. Their argumentation in this regard is, usually, centred around one of the following points:

First: Weak or fabricated *ḥadīths*, which they use to buttress their stand on the issue. However, once the fictitious nature of such *ḥadīths* or their weakness is uncovered, the purported argument itself becomes baseless. Some examples of those *ḥadīths* are as follows:

1- The famous scholar and one of the four imams of the Muslims schools of law. (Translator)

2- *Al-Mash'ar al-Ḥarām* is another name for *Muzdalifah*, a suburb of Makkah city. (Translator)

١– (توسّلوا بجاهي فإنّ جاهي عند الله عظيم)، أو (إذا سألتم الله فاسألوه بجاهي فإنّ جاهي عند الله عظيم).

1- "Use my prestige [i.e. the Prophet's] to seek access [to Allāh], for my prestige in the sight of Allāh is an esteemed one".

Or: "When you ask Allāh, ask Him with my prestige, for my prestige, in His sight, is an esteemed one".

The statement above is a fabricated *ḥadīth*, neither reported by any Muslim scholar, nor recorded in any of the *ḥadīth* compilations.

٢– (إذا أعيتكم الأمور فعليكم بأهل القبور)، أو (فاستغيثوا بأهل القبور).

2- "Whenever you are bewildered or confounded with a matter, then you should call on the dead to help you".

This, as well, in the opinion of all Muslim scholars, is a spurious and forged statement.

٣– (لو أحسن أحدُكم ظنّه بحجر لنفعه).

3- "An ordinary stone could have been a source of benefit to one of you, if he had had a good impression of it".

This is another *ḥadīth* fabricated by some polytheists, and its content obviously runs contrary to the teachings of Islam.

٤– (لما اقترف آدم الخطيئة قال: يا ربِّ أسألك بحقِّ محمد لما غفرت لي، فقال: يا آدم وكيف عرفتَ محمداً ولم أخلقه؟ قال: يا ربِّ لما خلقتني بيدك ونفختَ فيَّ من روحك رفعتُ رأسي فرأيتُ على قوائم العرش مكتوباً: لا إله إلاّ الله محمد رسول الله، فعلمتُ أنّك لم تضف إلى اسمك إلاّ أحب الخلق إليك، فقال: غفرتُ لك ولولا محمد ما خلقتُك).

4- "After Ādam (ﷺ) had committed the sin, he said, "O my Lord!, With the prestige of Muḥammad, I beseech You to forgive me". Allāh said, "O Ādam! How did you know of Muḥammad when I have not yet created him"? He replied: "O my Lord! After

you have created me with Your own Hand and breathed into me the soul You have made, I raised my head and saw thereby an inscription on the poles of the Throne reading: 'There is no god worthy of worship save Allāh, and Muḥammad is His Messenger'. I deduced from this that you have appended his name to Yours because of his being your most beloved creature". Allāh said, "I have forgiven you; were it not for the sake of Muḥammad, I would not have created you[1]".

This also is a false and baseless *ḥadīth*. In another fabricated one, the content reads:

(لولاك ما خلقتُ الأفلاك).

"Had it not been for your sake [Muḥammad] I would not have made the orbits".

The attitude of a Muslim towards these and other forged *ḥadīths* should be total negligence, and should never, in the least, see in them a proof, let alone relying on them in his religion.

Second: Genuine *ḥadīths*, which they either misunderstand or deliberately distort and misinterpret. Some of these *ḥadīths* are:

١ – (أنَّ عمر بن الخطاب (ﷺ) كان إذا قحطوا استسقى بالعباس بن عبد المطلب، فقال: اللّهمَّ إنّا كنّا نتوسَّل إليك بنبيّنا فتسقينا، وإنّا نتوسَّل إليك بعمِّ نبيّنا فاسقنا، قال: فيُسقون).

1- **"Each time they suffered drought, 'Umar bin al-Khaṭṭāb asked al-'Abbās bin 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib** [the Prophet's uncle] **to**

1- Al-Albāni, Muḥammad Nāsir al-din, *Silsilatu al-Aḥādīth al-Ḍa'īfah wa al-Mawḍū'ah* (The Series of Weak and Fabricated *Ḥadīths*), vol.i, pp. 88, *ḥadīth* no. 25.

invoke Allāh for rain. He would say, "O Allāh! We used to ask our Prophet to invoke You for rain and you have always blessed us with such. Now (after the death of the Prophet) we ask his uncle to invoke You for rain on our behalf, so we beseech You to give us rain". The narrator added: "And they would be given rain". (*Bukhārī*: 1010)

Those opponents of *Ahl al-Sunnah* (The Orthodox Sunni Muslims) erroneously infer from the above *ḥadīth* that 'Umar actually used the prestige of 'Abbās and his position in Allāh's sight as a means of approach to Him. They therefore interpret the contents as "We have been using the prestige of our Prophet to seek access to You, and you would give us rain. We now use that of his uncle to seek access to You".

This is, clearly, a misunderstanding on their part, and a very remote interpretation, which is even incompatible with the context. Using the person or prestige of the Prophet (ﷺ) as a method of approach to Allāh was, as far as the Companions of the Prophet were concerned, an unknown phenomenon. They would instead ask him, during his lifetime, to invoke Allāh on their behalf, as we have earlier mentioned some instances of this. Thus, when 'Umar (ﷺ) made his aforementioned statement **"Now (after the death of the Prophet) we ask his uncle to invoke You for rain on our behalf"**, he never had in mind using 'Abbās's prestige or person, but rather his invocation on their behalf. Besides, had taking the person or prestige of anyone as a way of seeking Allāh's favour been a known phenomenon to them, it would have been meaningless on the part of 'Umar to give up using

the person or prestige of the Prophet (ﷺ) and resort to that of 'Abbās (ﷺ). Other Companions too would have questioned the rationale for such a move. Since no objection of this kind was raised by them, and having known that they actually used the Prophet's invocation for them during his lifetime, or that of someone else after his death as a means of approach to Allāh, it is understandable that what they believed to be lawful with respect to *Tawassul* was to use the invocation of the intermediary and not his person.

The *ḥadīth* therefore, comprises no proof in support of the view that says a person or his prestige may be used as a means of approach to Allāh (ﷻ).

2- 'Uthmān bin Ḥunaif (ﷺ) narrated: A blind man came to the Prophet and said, "Ask Allāh to cure me (to restore my sight)". The Prophet (ﷺ) replied:

(إن شئتَ دعوتُ وإن شئتَ صبرتَ فهو خيرٌ لك).

"If that is your wish I shall do, but should you wish to endure your disability that would be better for you". The man repeated his demand for the prophet's invocation. Then, the Prophet commanded him to perform ablution in the best way he could and say the following supplication:

(اللّهمَّ إنّي أسألك وأتوجّه إليك بنبيِّك محمد نبيِّ الرحمة، إنّي توجّهتُ بك إلى ربّي في حاجتي هذه لتُقضى لي، اللّهمَّ فشفِّعه فيّ).

"O Allāh! I beseech You and turn towards You through Your Prophet, Muḥammad; the Prophet of mercy. Through you I have turned towards my Lord, that my request may be granted. O

Allāh, accept his intercession for me". (*Sunan Tirmidhi*: 3578; *Musnad Aḥmad* vol. iv p. 138[1]).

Those antagonists think that the above *ḥadīth* sanctions the use of the Prophet's prestige or that of any other righteous individual as a means of approach to Allāh, whereas the *ḥadīth*, in reality, is void of any indication to this. The blind man only requested that the Prophet (ﷺ) invokes Allāh to restore his sight, and thus he responded saying, **"If that is your wish I shall do, but should you wish to endure your disability, that would be better for you"**, but the man insisted that he should invoke Allāh. The wording of this *ḥadīth* has, therefore, clearly proved that the story was only an instance of a *tawassul* through the Prophet's supplication, and not through his person or prestige. Based on this, Muslim scholars such as al-Baihaqi[2], regard the contents of this *ḥadīth* as a manifestation of the Prophet's miracle and an example of how Allāh answerd his invocations. Allāh (ﷻ) restored the blind man's sight in recognition of the blessings of the Prophet's invocation for him.

However, after the death of the Prophet (ﷺ), receiving such a blessing the blind man enjoyed is unrealistic, for it is impossible that the Prophet would supplicate for any one after he (ﷺ) has died. A *ḥadīth* of his reads as follows:

1- According to *al-Baihaqī*, the chain of transmission for this *ḥadīth* is sound.

2- See his voluminous book: *Dalāil al-Nubūwwah* (Proofs of Prophethood) vol. vi, p. 167.

(إذا مات الإنسان انقطع عمله إلاّ من ثلاث: صدقة جارية أو علم يُنتفع به، أو ولد صالح يدعو له).

"The acts of everyman come to an end with his death, except for three. These are: recurring charity, knowledge by which the people after him benefit, and a righteous offspring who invokes Allāh for him". (*Muslim*: 1631). Supplication, understandably, is one of those good deeds that are bound to cease with the death of any human being.

In any case, the arguments put forward by the antagonists are devoid of any proof, as they are all based on either unreliable traditions, or on sound *ḥadīths* whose contents have nothing to do with their false claim.

2.3.7 Excess (*Al-Ghuluww*)

a) Definition:

Exceeding the proper limits in any way, either by overrating or underrating something is called *'ghuluww'* in the Arabic language.

The word *ghuluww* as an Islamic term indicates going beyond the limit set by Allāh for His servants, concerning their belief or worship.

b) Rule:

Excess is prohibited in Islam. This has been stated in a number of religious texts, which also warn against being excessive, and explain the immediate and remote consequences that await the fanatics. Allāh (ﷻ) says,

﴿يَٰٓأَهۡلَ ٱلۡكِتَٰبِ لَا تَغۡلُواْ فِي دِينِكُمۡ وَلَا تَقُولُواْ عَلَى ٱللَّهِ إِلَّا ٱلۡحَقَّۚ﴾.

O people of the Book, do not commit excess in your religion or say about Allāh except the truth. (al-Nisā': 171).

﴿قُلۡ يَٰٓأَهۡلَ ٱلۡكِتَٰبِ لَا تَغۡلُواْ فِي دِينِكُمۡ غَيۡرَ ٱلۡحَقِّ وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوٓاْ أَهۡوَآءَ قَوۡمٖ قَدۡ ضَلُّواْ مِن قَبۡلُ وَأَضَلُّواْ كَثِيرٗا وَضَلُّواْ عَن سَوَآءِ ٱلسَّبِيلِ﴾.

Say, "O people of the Book, do not exceed the limits in your religion beyond the truth, and do not follow the inclinations of a people who had gone astray before and misled many, and have strayed from the right path". (al-Mā'idah: 77).

A narration by Ibn 'Abbās (رضي الله عنهما) has it that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said,

(إيّاكم والغلو، فإنّما هلك من كان قبلكم بالغلو في الدين).

"Beware of excess, for those who preceded you were destroyed on the grounds of being extremists in [practicing their] religion". (*Musnad Aḥmad*: vol. i p. 347; al-*Mustadrak* vol. i p. 638[1]).

In another *ḥadīth* reported by Ibn Mas'ūd (رضي الله عنه), Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said,

In another *ḥadīth* reported by Ibn Mas'ud (رضي الله عنه), Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said,

(هلك المتنطّعون).

"Those who exceed the limits have perished!". He repeated this thrice. (*Muslim*: 2670).

According to a report by 'Umar bin al-Khaṭṭāb (رضي الله عنه), the Prophet (ﷺ) has also said,

(لا تُطروني كما أطرت النصارى عيسى بن مريم، إنّما أنا عبد الله ورسوله).

"Do not overrate me as the Christians had done with respect to 'Īsa ibn Maryam (Jesus the son of Mary), for I am only a servant of Allāh and His Messenger". (*Bukhāri*: 3445).

In this *ḥadīth* the Prophet (ﷺ) warned his adherents not to go too far in extolling him, lest they reach the extent of saying of him what the Christians had said of Jesus by calling him Lord or God. He further declared that he was only a servant of Allāh, and that he should be described as Allāh had described him: 'A servant of Allāh and His Messenger'. However, those who have gone astray insisted on disobeying the Prophet's order and perpetrating what he has forbidden.

1- A *ṣaḥīḥ ḥadīth*, according to both Ḥākim and Dhahabi.

Thus, they strongly disagreed with him, went beyond the limit in extolling him and said of him exactly what the Christians have said concerning Jesus or close to that. Those erring people ask the Prophet (ﷺ) to forgive their sins, to dispel their sorrows, cure their illnesses, and so on. Such requests can only be answered by the one and only God, Allāh, while directing them to a created being is an act of *ghuluww* in religious matters.

2.4 Polytheism, disbelief and the types thereof

Undoubtedly, every Muslim has a lot to gain by knowing what polytheism and disbelief are, including the causes of both, their means and their types. Provided that his intention for such a knowledge is to protect himself against their evils or plights. Allāh loves to see His creatures knowing what is right so that they may love and follow it, and knowing the wrong path in order to hate and avoid it. A Muslim is not only required to identify what is good and implement it, but also to recognize evil and beware of it. The two most authentic collections of the *ḥadīth* quote Ḥudhaifah bin al-Yamān, a Companion of the Prophet to have said, "People used to ask Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) about good thing, but I used to ask him about the evil one, lest it should befall me". (*Bukhārī*: 7084; *Muslim*: 1847). And in the words of 'Umar bin al-Khaṭṭāb (ﷺ), "It is only when we have people born and grew up as Muslims without any idea of pre-Islamic paganism that the handhold of Islam will begin to retract little by little".

Many verses of the Glorious Qur'ān have spoken on polytheism and disbelief, cautioned against involvement in either, and exposed their bad consequences in this life and in the hereafter. Besides, this constitutes a principal objective of the message of the Glorious Qur'ān and the *Sunnah*. Allāh (ﷻ) says,

﴿وَكَذَٰلِكَ نُفَصِّلُ ٱلْـَٔايَـٰتِ وَلِتَسْتَبِينَ سَبِيلُ ٱلْمُجْرِمِينَ﴾.

And thus do We detail the *ayahs* (verses, signs, etc.), and [thus] the way of the criminals will become evident. (al-An'ām: 55).

In the coming pages, we shall discuss some important issues relating to this topic.

2.4.1 Polytheism (*Shirk*)

a) Definition:

From a linguistic viewpoint, the word *shirk* simply means putting two things on an equal footing. But a view of the same word from an Islamic perspective gives room for a wider import of two subdivisions: general and specific meanings.

The general meaning of *Shirk* implies believing in someone or something as being equal to Allāh in what should be exclusively for Him. This is also subdivided into three types as follows:

1- *Shirk* in Allāh's Lordship. This happens when one picks an equal for Allāh in a Lordship-related attribute, or ascribe such an attribute to any other being. The Lordship-related attributes include: creation and the act of providing for the created, giving and taking of life, as well as the running of the universe. Allāh (ﷻ) says,

﴿هَلْ مِنْ خَٰلِقٍ غَيْرُ ٱللَّهِ يَرْزُقُكُم مِّنَ ٱلسَّمَآءِ وَٱلْأَرْضِ لَآ إِلَٰهَ إِلَّا هُوَ فَأَنَّىٰ تُؤْفَكُونَ﴾.

Is there any creator other than Allāh who provides for you from the heaven and earth? There is no deity worthy of worship save He. How then are you deluded? (Fāṭir: 3).

2- *Shirk* with regards to Allāh's names and attributes. That is to invent a peer for Him in any of His names or qualities, for He has said,

﴿لَيْسَ كَمِثْلِهِۦ شَىْءٌ وَهُوَ ٱلسَّمِيعُ ٱلْبَصِيرُ﴾.

Nothing is like Him, and He is the Hearing, the Seeing. (al-Shūra: 11).

3- *Shirk* in Allāh's Divinity. This is to give any of His divine characteristics or the right of being worshiped to another being. This

may be through prayer, fasting, supplication, seeking help, animal sacrifices, vow, etc. Allāh (ﷻ) says,

﴿ وَمِنَ ٱلنَّاسِ مَن يَتَّخِذُ مِن دُونِ ٱللَّهِ أَندَادًا يُحِبُّونَهُمْ كَحُبِّ ٱللَّهِ ﴾.

And [yet], there are among the people who take other than Allāh as equals [to Him]. They love them as they love Allāh. (al-Baqarah: 165).

As for the specific meaning of *Shirk*, this implies giving to Allāh a rival whom one will also invoke, ask for his/its intercession, love, and even see as his/her hope. Each time the word *Shirk* is mentioned either in the Glorious Qur'ān or the *ḥadīth*, this special meaning of the word usually comes first to mind.

b) Proofs on the condemnation and danger of *Shirk*

The Islamic texts have censured *Shirk* and warned against it in various ways. They have similarly demonstrated the danger and grave consequences that the polytheists incur in this life and in the hereafter.

- Allāh called *Shirk* the 'unforgivable sin', unless the polytheist repents before his death. He says,

﴿ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ لَا يَغْفِرُ أَن يُشْرَكَ بِهِۦ وَيَغْفِرُ مَا دُونَ ذَٰلِكَ لِمَن يَشَآءُ ﴾.

Indeed, Allāh forgives not associating partners with Him, but He forgives what is less than that for whom He wills. (al-Nisā': 48).

- Allāh also described it as the worst of all injustices. He says,

﴿ إِنَّ ٱلشِّرْكَ لَظُلْمٌ عَظِيمٌ ﴾.

***Shirk* is indeed, a gross injustice.** (Luqmān: 13).

- Also, Allāh has described *Shirk* as capable of destroying one's good deeds. He says,

﴿وَلَقَدۡ أُوحِيَ إِلَيۡكَ وَإِلَى ٱلَّذِينَ مِن قَبۡلِكَ لَئِنۡ أَشۡرَكۡتَ لَيَحۡبَطَنَّ عَمَلُكَ وَلَتَكُونَنَّ مِنَ ٱلۡخَٰسِرِينَ﴾.

And surely, It has been revealed to you and to those before you [that] if you should associate [anything with Allāh] your deed would surely become worthless, and you would surely be among the losers. (al-Zumar: 65).

- He also described it as implying disrespect for the Lord of all beings, and claiming an equal for Him. Allāh says,

﴿قَالُواْ وَهُمۡ فِيهَا يَخۡتَصِمُونَ ٩٦ تَٱللَّهِ إِن كُنَّا لَفِي ضَلَٰلٖ مُّبِينٍ ٩٧ إِذۡ نُسَوِّيكُم بِرَبِّ ٱلۡعَٰلَمِينَ﴾.

They will say while they dispute therein, "By Allāh, we were indeed in manifest error. When we equated you [false gods] with the Lord of all beings". (al-Shu'arā : 96-98).

- Furthermore, Allāh declared that any one who dies as a polytheist will be permanent inhabitant of the Hellfire. He says,

﴿إِنَّهُۥ مَن يُشۡرِكۡ بِٱللَّهِ فَقَدۡ حَرَّمَ ٱللَّهُ عَلَيۡهِ ٱلۡجَنَّةَ وَمَأۡوَىٰهُ ٱلنَّارُۖ وَمَا لِلظَّٰلِمِينَ مِنۡ أَنصَارٖ﴾.

Indeed, he who associates others with Allāh - Allāh has forbidden him Paradise, and the Fire will be his abode. And there are not for the wrongdoers any helpers. (al- Mā'idah: 72).

Proofs of various kinds in this respect are many in the Glorious Qur'ān.

c) The cause of *Shirk*

The root cause of *Shirk* and the motive behind its occurrence among mankind is their extreme dogma regarding the righteous and highly esteemed people, and their usual excess in extolling or praising them. Allāh says,

﴿ وَقَالُوا لَا تَذَرُنَّ آلِهَتَكُمْ وَلَا تَذَرُنَّ وَدًّا وَلَا سُوَاعًا وَلَا يَغُوثَ وَيَعُوقَ وَنَسْرًا ﴿٢٣﴾ وَقَدْ أَضَلُّوا كَثِيرًا وَلَا تَزِدِ الظَّالِمِينَ إِلَّا ضَلَالًا ﴾.

And they said, "Never leave your gods; and leave neither *Wadd*, nor *Suwā'*, nor *Yaghūth*, nor *Ya'ūq*, nor *Nasr*. And already they have misled many. And [O Allāh!], grant no increase to the wrongdoers save error. (Nūḥ: 23-24).

These are names of some righteous men among the people of Nūḥ, after whose death their contemporaries made their statues and named the same after them. Although their aim was to glorify the men, immortalize their remembrance and commemorate their virtues, they ended up worshipping them.

An indication to this is found in a narration by Ibn 'Abbās (رضي الله عنهما) who said, "The idols which the people of Nūḥ had worshipped, later became objects of worship among the Arabs. The *Kalb* tribe at *Daumat l Jandal*[1] used to worship *Wadd*, *Hudhail* were worshipping *Suwā'*, while *Yaghūth* was first worshipped by *Murād* tribe, then by *Banu Ghutaif* of *Jurf* near *Saba'*. The *Hamadans* took *Ya'ūq* as their object of worship, and the *DhilKalā'* tribe of *Himyar* opted for *Nasr*. The aforementioned names of idols were initially those of some virtuous men among the people of Nūḥ. After the death of those righteous men, Satan inspired their people to place idols, which should be named after them, at the places where they used to sit

1- A village in the northern part of Arabian Peninsula. Presently, it is a famous town in al- Jouf, one of the Saudi Arabian provinces. Cf. *al- Ḥamawi, Yāqut, Mu'jam al-Buldan* vol. ii p.487; Junaidil, Sa'd, *Mu'jam al-Amkinat al-Wārid dhikrua fi Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhāri*, Riyadh: 1419 A.H, p. 231. (Translator)

during their lifetime. They did as Satan commanded them to do, but never worshipped the statues. After that generation, the reason for what they did concerning the statues of those men became obscure, and thus the new generation adopted the worship of their idols". (*Bukhāri*: 4920).

As part of his commentary on the above mentioned verse:



And they said, "Never leave your gods...", Ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabari narrated from Muḥammad bin Qais who said, "They [Wadd, Suwā' ...] were a group of virtuous people who had others who followed their example. After their death, it came to the minds of their followers that if they produced portraits of their deceased leaders, that would give them more enthusiasm for engaging in acts of worship as long as they remember those righteous men. They, therefore, made the portraits [without adopting them as objects of worship]. After their demise, Satan rushed to tell the succeeding generation that their ancestors used to worship those men, and that for their sake, they were usually blessed with rain. Thus, that generation worshipped them[1]".

By so doing they have combined two evils, their devotion to the graves of the virtuous men, and carving the portraits which they later put in the men's sitting-places and began to visit them. The two acts were the major causes of *Shirk* for the first time in human history, and remain the principal means thereof anytime, any place.

1- *Tafsīr al-Ṭabari*, vol. xii, p. 254.

d) Types of *Shirk*

Shirk has two types, namely: major and minor *Shirk*.

The major *Shirk* means associating something with Allāh as a peer and worshipping both. This sends one outside the fold of Islam and destroys whatever good deeds he/she might have done in the past. Moreover, if one should die in a situation like this, he will live permanently in the Hellfire, where he will never cease to live, and yet the punishment therein will never be reduced. This major *Shirk* is divisible into four as follows:

1- *Shirk* in connection with supplication.

Supplication is a high-ranking act of worship in Islam. In fact, the very core of worship, according to a statement by the Prophet (ﷺ) that, (الدعاء هو العبادة) i.e. **"Supplication is the worship"** (*Musnad Aḥmad* vol. iv p. 267; *Sunan Tirmidhi: ḥadīth* no. 2969[1]). Allāh (ﷻ) says,

﴿ وَقَالَ رَبُّكُمُ ادْعُونِي أَسْتَجِبْ لَكُمْ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَسْتَكْبِرُونَ عَنْ عِبَادَتِي سَيَدْخُلُونَ جَهَنَّمَ دَاخِرِينَ ﴾.

And your Lord said, "Call upon Me; I will respond to you. Indeed, those who scorn My worship will enter Hell, disgraced". (Ghāfir: 60).

Since supplication is an act of worship, directing it to anyone other than Allāh is *Shirk*. Accordingly, whoever invokes a Prophet, an angel, a righteous man or woman, a tomb, a stone or any other created being has become polytheist and disbeliever. Allāh (ﷻ) says,

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1- The *ḥadīth* is "*ḥasan-ṣaḥīḥ*", according to Tirmidhi.

﴿ وَمَن يَدْعُ مَعَ ٱللَّهِ إِلَٰهًا ءَاخَرَ لَا بُرْهَٰنَ لَهُۥ بِهِۦ فَإِنَّمَا حِسَابُهُۥ عِندَ رَبِّهِۦٓ ۚ إِنَّهُۥ لَا يُفْلِحُ ٱلْكَٰفِرُونَ ﴾.

And whoever invokes besides Allāh another deity for which he has no proof, then his reckoning is only with his Lord [Allāh]. Surely, the unbelievers will not succeed. (al-Mu'minūn: 117).

That supplication is an act of worship, while offering it to anyone besides Allāh is an act of *Shirk* (polytheism) is further proofed in the following verse:

﴿ فَإِذَا رَكِبُوا۟ فِى ٱلْفُلْكِ دَعَوُا۟ ٱللَّهَ مُخْلِصِينَ لَهُ ٱلدِّينَ فَلَمَّا نَجَّىٰهُمْ إِلَى ٱلْبَرِّ إِذَا هُمْ يُشْرِكُونَ ﴾.

And when they board a ship, they supplicate Allāh, sincere to Him in religion. But when He delivers them safe to the land, at once they associate others with Him. (al-'Ankabūt: 65).

Here, Allāh (ﷻ) states that the polytheists associate partners with Him only in states of well-being, but worship Him alone in hard and trying times. Now imagine the case of a person who associates others with Allāh, whether he lives in affluence or he is in distress!

2- *Shirk* of intention and volition.

This happens when a man's intention for performing his acts of worship is purely material or just to show off, –as people with sheer hypocrisy usually do– and aims to gain neither Allāh's pleasure nor the blessing of the hereafter. Such a person has committed a major *Shirk*. Allāh (ﷻ) says,

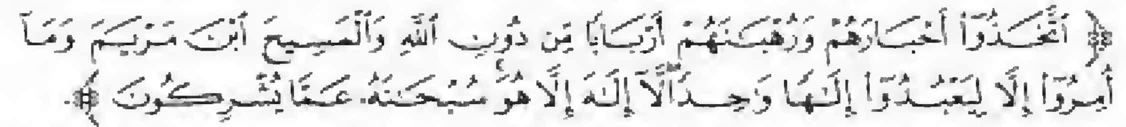
﴿ مَن كَانَ يُرِيدُ ٱلْحَيَوٰةَ ٱلدُّنْيَا وَزِينَتَهَا نُوَفِّ إِلَيْهِمْ أَعْمَٰلَهُمْ فِيهَا وَهُمْ فِيهَا لَا يُبْخَسُونَ ۝١٥ أُو۟لَٰٓئِكَ ٱلَّذِينَ لَيْسَ لَهُمْ فِى ٱلْءَاخِرَةِ إِلَّا ٱلنَّارُ ۖ وَحَبِطَ مَا صَنَعُوا۟ فِيهَا وَبَٰطِلٌ مَّا كَانُوا۟ يَعْمَلُونَ ﴾.

Whoever desires the life of this world and its adornments- We fully repay them for their deeds therein, and they, therein, will not be wronged. They are those for whom there is nothing in the hereafter except the Fire. And vain is whatever they did therein, and worthless is that which they used to do. (Hūd: 15-16).

This type of *Shirk* is very critical and dangerous.

3- *Shirk* in obedience.

Whoever obeys any of Allāh's creatures either in making lawful what He has proscribed, or prohibiting what He permits has actually taken whom he obeys to that extent as other gods besides Allāh. He has thus committed a Major *Shirk*, provided that he believes in such people's right to allow or forbid those things either for him or for any other fellow, even when he knows that their judgement in this respect is against the teachings of Islam. Allāh (ﷻ) says,



They [The Jews and the Christians] took their rabbis and monks as lords besides Allāh, and [have also taken as lord] the Messiah, son of Maryam (Mary). And they were only commanded to worship just one God; there is no deity worthy of worship except Him. Glorified be He [Exalted is He] above whatever they associate [with Him]. (al-Tawbah: 31).

An unambiguous exposition of this verse would reveal that obeying their scholars and the devout among them, rather than invoking them, is the subject matter here. Thus, when 'Adiyy bin

Ḥātim (ﷺ) remarked saying, "We (Christians[1]) never worshipped them", the Prophet (ﷺ) explained to him that their compliance with the orders of those religious leaders, which happened to be the negation of Allāh's commandment is, in fact, their worshipping them. He said,

(أليس يُحرِّمون ما أحلّ الله فتحرِّمونه ويُحلّون ما حرّم الله فتحلّونه).

"Is it not true that they forbid what Allāh has permitted and allow what He has forbidden, and you follow them in both"? 'Adiyy answered in the affirmative. Then the Prophet (ﷺ) said, **"That is how you worship them".** (*Sunan Tirmidhi*: 3095; *Ṭabarānī, al-Mu'jam al-Kabīr* vol. xvii, p. 92[2]).

4- *Shirk* in love.

That is love in conjunction with servitude, and usually necessitates glorification, exaltation, humility and submission to the beloved. This kind of love is due to Allāh alone, and anyone who offers such to other than Him has committed a major *Shirk*. The proof of this comes in the following Qur'ānic verse:

﴿ وَمِنَ ٱلنَّاسِ مَن يَتَّخِذُ مِن دُونِ ٱللَّهِ أَندَادًا يُحِبُّونَهُمْ كَحُبِّ ٱللَّهِ ۖ وَٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوٓا۟ أَشَدُّ حُبًّا لِّلَّهِ ﴾.

And [yet], there are among the people who take other than Allāh as equals [to Him]. They love them as they love Allāh, but those who believe are stronger in their love for Allāh. (al-Baqarah: 165).

1- 'Adiyy (ﷺ) was once a Christian before he embraced Islam. (Translator)

2- A *ḥasan ḥadīth*, in the opinion of Tirmidhi, one of its narrators.

Minor *Shirk*, on the other hand, is either means of the major *shirk* or any act or saying branded as *shirk* in the religious texts, but falls short of the standard of a major one. The rule concerning a minor polytheist is the same as that of perpetrator of a capital offence in Islam, whose fate will only be decided in the hereafter according to Allāh's volition. Some instances of minor *Shirk* include the following:

a) Minimal Showing-off

According to a narration by Imam Aḥmad and others, the Prophet (ﷺ) once addressed his Companions saying, **"What I fear most that you might commit is the minor *Shirk*".** They said, "But what is the minor *Shirk*, O Allāh's Messenger"? He replied,

(الرياء، يقول الله تعالى يوم القيامة إذا جازى الناس بأعمالهم: اذهبــوا إلى الــذين كنــتم تراؤون في الدنيا، فانظروا هل تجدون عندهم جزاء).

Showing off [1]. Allāh will say on the Day of Resurrection after He had recompensed mankind for their deeds, "Go to those whom you would have liked to see you and praise you for whatever good deed you performed while you were alive, and see then if you could get any reward from them". (*Musnad Aḥmad* vol. v, p. 428[2]).

b) Saying, "What Allāh, and you too may will". (*Mā shā Allāh wa shi'ta*).

1- That is in matters of worship.

2- The chain of transmission for this *ḥadīth* is good, said al-Mundhiri in his *al-Targhīb wa al-Tarhīb* vol. i, p. 48, while al-Haithami also adjudged the narrators to be men of the *ṣaḥīḥ ḥadīths*. *Majma' al-Zawāid*, vol. i, p. 102.

Concerning this, Abu Dawūd narrated in his *Sunan* that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said,

(لا تقولوا ما شاء الله وشاء فلان، ولكن قولوا ما شاء الله ثم شاء فلان).

Never say, 'What Allāh and so and so person may will', but rather, you should say, "What Allāh may will, then what so and so may will[1]". (*Sunan Abu Dawūd*: 4980[2]).

c) **Saying,** "But for Allāh's and so and so person's intervention, this or that would have happened", or "But for the presence of the duck, the thieves would have gained entrance into the house", etc.

According to Ibn Abi Ḥātim[3], Ibn 'Abbās (رضي الله عنهما) said in his comment on the meaning of Allāh's saying:

﴿فَلَا تَجْعَلُوا لِلَّهِ أَندَادًا وَأَنتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ﴾.

So do not attribute equals to Allāh, while you know [that He alone has the right to be worshipped]. (al-Baqarah: 22).

"[Attributing to Allāh] equals is an act of *Shirk*, which is more inconspicuous than the creeping of an ant on a black rock in the darkness of night. It is to say, 'By Allāh, by your life, oh so and so person, and mine'!, or 'Had there not been the duck, or the small dog of this or that person in the house, the thieves would have gained entrance'. Or that a man should say to his fellows, 'If Allāh and you too will'. Or the expression: 'But for Allāh's and so and so person's intervention, this or that would have happened'. You should not mention any person in these cases, for doing so is an act of *Shirk*".

1- That is if it is necessary to add the name of such a person in the statement. However, to say "What Allāh alone may will" is far better. (Translator)

2- The chain of transmission is *ṣāliḥ* (acceptable), according to Dhahabi in *Mukhtaṣar al-Baiaqi* 1/140/2.

3- Ibn Abi Ḥātim, *al-Tafsīr* vol. i, p. 62.

The difference between major and minor *Shirk*

The two are different from each other in many ways, the most important of which are as follows:

1- Major *Shirk* is an unforgivable sin, should its perpetrator die before repenting. As for the minor one, the perpetrator, whether he repents or not, may be forgiven if Allāh so wishes.

2- No previous act of worship will be valid the moment one engages in any act of major *Shirk*. The minor *Shirk*, however, nullifies only the act with which it occurs.

3- A perpetrator of minor *Shirk* remains in the fold of Islam, but that of major one has become a non-Muslim.

4- Major *Shirk* qualifies its perpetrator to live permanently in Hellfire, and for him Paradise has been forbidden. Minor *Shirk*, on the other hand, is a sin just like any other sin.

2.4.2 Disbelief (*Kufr*)

a) Definiton:

Linguistically, *Kufr* is an Arabic word meaning: concealment or the act of covering something. In Islamic terms, *Kufr* is the opposite of Faith (*Īmān*), and as such, lack of belief in Allāh and His Messenger. *Kufr* does not necessarily coincide with a denial of the divine message; as some other factors, including doubt or scepticism, deliberate avoidance of the truth as a result of envy, pride and submission to certain misleading caprices, may also be responsible for being an unbeliever.

b) Types of Disbelief:

The two types of *Kufr* are major and minor disbelief . With the former, one will be eligible to be permanently incarcerated in Hellfire, while the latter also subjects one to a transitory, but not permanent, punishment of the Fire.

i) Major Disbelief:

There are five sub-divisions of this type of unbelief. These are:

1- Disbelief as a result of denial. This means lack of belief in the truthfulness of Allāh's Messengers. Anyone who belies their message, either overtly or covertly, is an unbeliever. Allāh (ﷻ) says,

﴿ وَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنِ افْتَرَىٰ عَلَى اللَّهِ كَذِبًا أَوْ كَذَّبَ بِالْحَقِّ لَمَّا جَاءَهُ ۚ أَلَيْسَ فِي جَهَنَّمَ مَثْوًى لِّلْكَافِرِينَ ﴾

And who is more unjust than he who invented a lie against Allāh, or denied the truth when it came to him. Is there not a home in Hell for the unbelievers? (al-'Ankabūt: 68).

2- Disbelief through rejection and arrogance. This is when a person arrogantly and stubbornly refuses to abide by the rule of a Messenger of Allāh or comply with his order, in spite of being convinced of his truthfulness and the genuineness of his mission. The proof of this in the Book of Allāh goes thus:

﴿وَإِذْ قُلْنَا لِلْمَلَٰٓئِكَةِ ٱسْجُدُوا۟ لِـَٔادَمَ فَسَجَدُوٓا۟ إِلَّآ إِبْلِيسَ أَبَىٰ وَٱسْتَكْبَرَ وَكَانَ مِنَ ٱلْكَٰفِرِينَ﴾.

And [remember] when We said to the angels, "Prostrate yourselves before Ādam". They fell prostrate, all save *Iblīs* (Satan), who refused and behaved arrogantly. And was one of the unbelievers. (al-Baqarah: 34).

3- Sceptical unbelief. That is when one remains unconvinced of the truthfulness of Allāh's Messengers. It is also called "Disbelieving on the grounds of suspicion" (*Kufr al-Ẓann*), implying thereby lack of certainty or being indecisive. The proof comes in the body of the following Qur'ānic text:

﴿وَدَخَلَ جَنَّتَهُۥ وَهُوَ ظَالِمٌ لِّنَفْسِهِۦ قَالَ مَآ أَظُنُّ أَن تَبِيدَ هَٰذِهِۦٓ أَبَدًا (٣٥) وَمَآ أَظُنُّ ٱلسَّاعَةَ قَآئِمَةً وَلَئِن رُّدِدتُّ إِلَىٰ رَبِّى لَأَجِدَنَّ خَيْرًا مِّنْهَا مُنقَلَبًا (٣٦) قَالَ لَهُۥ صَاحِبُهُۥ وَهُوَ يُحَاوِرُهُۥٓ أَكَفَرْتَ بِٱلَّذِى خَلَقَكَ مِن تُرَابٍ ثُمَّ مِن نُّطْفَةٍ ثُمَّ سَوَّىٰكَ رَجُلًا (٣٧) لَّٰكِنَّا۠ هُوَ ٱللَّهُ رَبِّى وَلَآ أُشْرِكُ بِرَبِّىٓ أَحَدًا﴾.

And he entered his garden while he was unjust to himself. He said, 'I do not think this will ever perish. Likewise, I do not believe the Hour [Resurrection] will occur, and if indeed, I am eventually brought back to my Lord [on the Day], I will surely find better than this as a resort'. His comrade said to him during their

conversation, 'Have you disbelieved in He Who created you from dust, then from a sperm-drop, and then fashioned you a man? But as for me, He is Allāh, my Lord, and none shall I associate with my Lord as partner'. (al-Kahf : 35-38).

4- Disbelief as a result of deliberate avoidance of the truth. That is to keep oneself completely away from the religion of Islam, by turning a deaf ear to the divine message and paying no attention whatsoever to it. Allāh (ﷻ) says,

﴿وَٱلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا۟ عَمَّآ أُنذِرُوا۟ مُعْرِضُونَ﴾.

But those who disbelieve turn away from that of which they are warned. (al-Aḥqāf: 3).

5- Hypocritical unbelief or insincerity in the matters of Faith. That is in the case of someone who pretends to be a believer, while he is really an infidel[1]. Allāh (ﷻ) says,

﴿ذَٰلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ ءَامَنُوا۟ ثُمَّ كَفَرُوا۟ فَطُبِعَ عَلَىٰ قُلُوبِهِمْ فَهُمْ لَا يَفْقَهُونَ﴾.

That is because they believed and then disbelieved; their hearts are therefore sealed, and so they do not understand. (al-Munāfiqūn: 3).

Hypocrisy itself is of two types. These are:

a) Hypocrisy in Faith, which is also a major unbelief and capable of sending one out of the fold of Islam. This hypocrisy is subdivided into six, namely: Belying the Messenger of Allāh, or any part of his message; harbouring the hatred of Allāh's Messenger or of his

1- Ibn al-Qayyim, *Madārij al-Sālikīn*, vol. i, p. 346.

mission; as well as being happy when the mission or religion preached by the Messenger of Allāh suffers a set-back, or being unhappy about a victory recorded by such a mission.

b) Practical Hypocrisy. This is a minor unbelief and, as such, does not nullify the culprit's faith, even though it is a capital offence. Some instances of practical hypocrisy are mentioned in the following *ḥadīth*:

(أربع من كُنَّ فيه كان منافقاً خالصاً، ومَن كانت فيه خصلة منهنّ كانت فيه خصلة من النفاق حتى يدعَها: إذا اؤتُمن خان، وإذا حدّث كذب، وإذا عاهد غدر، وإذا خاصم فجر).

"Anyone with the following four characteristics is a downright hypocrite, and whoever has any of them has got in him a feature of hypocrisy until he gives it up. [They are:] If he is entrusted, he betrays the trust. If he speaks, he tells a lie. If he makes a covenant, he proves treacherous. And if he quarrels, he behaves in an unfair and dishonourable manner". (*Bukhārī*: 34; *Muslim*: 58).

The Prophet (ﷺ) has also said in another *ḥadīth*,

(آية المنافق ثلاث: إذا حدّث كذب، وإذا وعد أخلف، وإذا اؤتمن خان).

"The identifying characteristics of a hypocrite are three: Telling lies whenever he speaks, intentional breaching of self-made promises, and proving to be dishonest each time he is entrusted with something". (*Bukhārī*: 33).

ii) Minor Disbelief:

It is the unbelief that neither strips the culprit of his faith nor subjects him/her to everlasting punishment in Hell, but constitutes a dire threat of being punished by Allāh. This type of unbelief is also

known as *Kufr al-Ni'mah* (Ingratitude), and any mention of the word *kufr* in the religious texts must be understood in this context, given that the related act falls short of what we can call a major unbelief. Examples of this include what is mentioned in the following texts:

Allāh (ﷻ) says,

﴿ وَضَرَبَ ٱللَّهُ مَثَلًا قَرْيَةً كَانَتْ ءَامِنَةً مُّطْمَئِنَّةً يَأْتِيهَا رِزْقُهَا رَغَدًا مِّن كُلِّ مَكَانٍ فَكَفَرَتْ بِأَنْعُمِ ٱللَّهِ فَأَذَٰقَهَا ٱللَّهُ لِبَاسَ ٱلْجُوعِ وَٱلْخَوْفِ بِمَا كَانُوا۟ يَصْنَعُونَ ﴾.

And Allāh presents an example; a city which was safe and secure, its provision coming to it in abundance from all places, but it denied the favours of Allāh. So Allāh made it taste hunger and fear for what they had been doing. (al-Naḥl: 112).

Some *ḥadīths* of the Prophet (ﷺ) also read:

(اثنتان في الناس هما بهم كفر: الطعن في النسب والنياحة على الميّت).

"Two practices on the part of men are regarded as unbelief: Defaming another person's genealogy, and wailing for the dead". (*Muslim:* 67).

(لا ترجعوا بعدي كفاراً يضرب بعضكم رقاب بعض).

"Do not revert to unbelief after me by striking the necks of one another (killing each other)". (*Bukhārī:* 121; *Muslim:* 65).

The *Kufr* mentioned in the above texts and other similar ones is minor unbelief, whose perpetrator remains a Muslim. Allāh (ﷻ) has also said,

﴿وَإِن طَآئِفَتَانِ مِنَ ٱلۡمُؤۡمِنِينَ ٱقۡتَتَلُواْ فَأَصۡلِحُواْ بَيۡنَهُمَاۖ فَإِنۢ بَغَتۡ إِحۡدَىٰهُمَا عَلَى ٱلۡأُخۡرَىٰ فَقَٰتِلُواْ ٱلَّتِي تَبۡغِي حَتَّىٰ تَفِيٓءَ إِلَىٰٓ أَمۡرِ ٱللَّهِۚ فَإِن فَآءَتۡ فَأَصۡلِحُواْ بَيۡنَهُمَا بِٱلۡعَدۡلِ وَأَقۡسِطُوٓاْۖ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ يُحِبُّ ٱلۡمُقۡسِطِينَ ۝٩ إِنَّمَا ٱلۡمُؤۡمِنُونَ إِخۡوَةٞ فَأَصۡلِحُواْ بَيۡنَ أَخَوَيۡكُمۡۚ وَٱتَّقُواْ ٱللَّهَ لَعَلَّكُمۡ تُرۡحَمُونَ﴾.

And if two parties among the believers should fight, then make settlement between the two. But if one of them oppresses the other, then fight [you all] the oppressing party until it returns to the ordinance of Allāh. And if it does, you should then make reconciliation between them in justice. And act equitably, Allāh really loves those who act justly. The believers are but brothers, so reconcile between your brothers. And fear Allāh; that you may receive mercy. (al-Ḥujurāt: 9, 10).

Thus, Allāh referred to both parties as "believers" in spite of fighting one another. He also said,

﴿إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ لَا يَغۡفِرُ أَن يُشۡرَكَ بِهِۦ وَيَغۡفِرُ مَا دُونَ ذَٰلِكَ لِمَن يَشَآءُۚ وَمَن يُشۡرِكۡ بِٱللَّهِ فَقَدِ ٱفۡتَرَىٰٓ إِثۡمًا عَظِيمًا﴾.

Indeed, Allāh does not forgive association of partners with him. But He forgives what is less than that for whom He wills. And he who associates partners with Allāh has certainly invented a tremendous sin. (al-Nisā': 48).

This verse indicates that, based on what Allāh may will, the perpetrator of any sin except *Shirk* will either be completely pardoned by Allāh, or be subjected first to punishment in proportion to his misdeed. As for *Shirk,* the verse has likewise spoken plainly enough that such is an unpardonable offence in the sight of Almighty Allāh, who has also said,

﴿إِنَّهُۥ مَن يُشْرِكْ بِٱللَّهِ فَقَدْ حَرَّمَ ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ ٱلْجَنَّةَ وَمَأْوَىٰهُ ٱلنَّارُ ۖ وَمَا لِلظَّٰلِمِينَ مِنْ أَنصَارٍ﴾.

Whoever associates partners with Allāh, for such Allāh has indeed forbidden Paradise, and his abode will be Fire. For wrongdoers, there will be no helpers. (al- Mā'idah: 72).

2.5 Claiming the knowledge of unseen and the like

Unseen (*Ghaib*) is any thing of the past, present or future affairs that is hidden for human minds or sights. Allāh alone, and none else, has the knowledge of unseen. He says,

﴿قُل لَّا يَعْلَمُ مَن فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ الْغَيْبَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ﴾.

Say, "None in the heavens and on earth knows the unseen, but Allāh". (al-Naml: 65).

﴿لَهُ غَيْبُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ﴾.

He has [the knowledge of] unseen [aspects] of the heavens and the earth. (al-Kahf: 26).

﴿عَالِمُ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ الْكَبِيرُ الْمُتَعَالِ﴾.

He is the One who knows the unseen and the witnessed, the Grand, the Exalted. (al-Ra'd: 9).

None but Allāh (ﷻ) alone knows the unseen, not even an angel nor a Messenger of His, let alone any other inferior creature. Here is what Allāh said about Nūḥ, His prophet (ﷺ),

﴿وَلَا أَقُولُ لَكُمْ عِندِي خَزَائِنُ اللَّهِ وَلَا أَعْلَمُ الْغَيْبَ﴾.

And I do not tell you that I have the treasures of Allāh, neither do I know the unseen. (Hūd: 31).

As He has also said of Hūd (ﷺ),

﴿قَالَ إِنَّمَا الْعِلْمُ عِندَ اللَّهِ وَأُبَلِّغُكُم مَّا أُرْسِلْتُ بِهِ﴾.

He [Hūd] said, 'The knowledge [of what you asked for] is with Allāh alone. And I convey to you that with which I was sent'. (al-Aḥqāf: 23).

Allāh also commanded His Prophet, Muḥammad (ﷺ) saying,

﴿قُل لَّآ أَقُولُ لَكُمْ عِندِى خَزَآئِنُ ٱللَّهِ وَلَآ أَعْلَمُ ٱلْغَيْبَ﴾.

Say, 'I do not tell you that I have the treasures of Allāh, and I do not know the unseen'. (al-An'ām: 50).

Furthermore, He said,

﴿وَعَلَّمَ ءَادَمَ ٱلْأَسْمَآءَ كُلَّهَا ثُمَّ عَرَضَهُمْ عَلَى ٱلْمَلَٰٓئِكَةِ فَقَالَ أَنۢبِـُٔونِى بِأَسْمَآءِ هَٰٓؤُلَآءِ إِن كُنتُمْ صَٰدِقِينَ ﴿٣١﴾ قَالُوا۟ سُبْحَٰنَكَ لَا عِلْمَ لَنَآ إِلَّا مَا عَلَّمْتَنَآ ۖ إِنَّكَ أَنتَ ٱلْعَلِيمُ ٱلْحَكِيمُ﴾.

And He [Allāh] taught Ādam all the names. Then He showed them to the angels and said, 'Inform Me of the names of these, if you are truthful'. They said, 'Glory be to You; we have no knowledge except what You have taught us. Indeed, it is You who is the Knowing, the Wise'. (al-Baqarah: 31, 32).

However, Allāh (ﷻ) may choose to disclose some of the unseen to some of His creatures through revelation. He says accordingly,

﴿عَٰلِمُ ٱلْغَيْبِ فَلَا يُظْهِرُ عَلَىٰ غَيْبِهِۦٓ أَحَدًا ﴿٢٦﴾ إِلَّا مَنِ ٱرْتَضَىٰ مِن رَّسُولٍ فَإِنَّهُۥ يَسْلُكُ مِنۢ بَيْنِ يَدَيْهِ وَمِنْ خَلْفِهِۦ رَصَدًا ﴿٢٧﴾ لِّيَعْلَمَ أَن قَدْ أَبْلَغُوا۟ رِسَٰلَٰتِ رَبِّهِمْ وَأَحَاطَ بِمَا لَدَيْهِمْ وَأَحْصَىٰ كُلَّ شَىْءٍ عَدَدًۢا﴾.

He is the One who knows the unseen, and does not disclose His [knowledge of] unseen to anyone. Except for Messengers whom He has approved of, and He sends before him [i.e. each Messenger] and behind him observers. That He may make evident that they have conveyed the messages of their Lord; and He has encompassed whatever is with them, and has kept count of all things. (al-Jinn: 26-28).

What is being referred to in the above verses is the relative rather than the absolute unseen. The former, even though is unseen to some, but not so to other people. Whereas the absolute unseen is known only to Allāh (ﷻ), and who would dare claim to have such knowledge when Allāh has restricted its possession to Himself alone!

It is therefore incumbent upon every Muslim to be watchful of quacks and liars who invent lies against Allāh and claim to know the unseen. This folk include sorcerers, soothsayers and the like, who have gone astray, misled many, and yet, remain far from the right path.

We shall now touch on some of the tools those people employ to arrogate to themselves the knowledge of unseen, and, as a result, mislead the laymen and the ignorant among Muslims, and even undermine their belief.

1- Sorcery/Magic:

In a pure linguistic sense, one may refer to anything with an obscure or indistinct cause as '*siḥr*' (sorcery). But in a narrow technical import, the word '*siḥr*' means charms, spells and magical knots that may have fatal or less damaging effect or a body or soul, or stir up marital discord between two spouses, if Allāh had so willed.

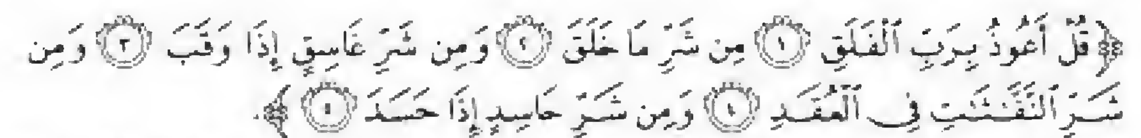
Sorcery is an act of disbelief, and, ipso facto, a sorcerer is an unbeliever who will have no portion of the benefits of the hereafter. Allāh (ﷻ) says,

﴿وَاتَّبَعُوا مَا تَتْلُوا الشَّيَاطِينُ عَلَىٰ مُلْكِ سُلَيْمَانَ ۖ وَمَا كَفَرَ سُلَيْمَانُ وَلَٰكِنَّ الشَّيَاطِينَ
كَفَرُوا يُعَلِّمُونَ النَّاسَ السِّحْرَ وَمَا أُنزِلَ عَلَى الْمَلَكَيْنِ بِبَابِلَ هَارُوتَ وَمَارُوتَ ۚ وَمَا يُعَلِّمَانِ
مِنْ أَحَدٍ حَتَّىٰ يَقُولَا إِنَّمَا نَحْنُ فِتْنَةٌ فَلَا تَكْفُرْ ۖ فَيَتَعَلَّمُونَ مِنْهُمَا مَا يُفَرِّقُونَ بِهِ بَيْنَ الْمَرْءِ
وَزَوْجِهِ ۚ وَمَا هُم بِضَارِّينَ بِهِ مِنْ أَحَدٍ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ ۚ وَيَتَعَلَّمُونَ مَا يَضُرُّهُمْ وَلَا يَنفَعُهُمْ ۚ
وَلَقَدْ عَلِمُوا لَمَنِ اشْتَرَاهُ مَا لَهُ فِي الْآخِرَةِ مِنْ خَلَاقٍ ۚ وَلَبِئْسَ مَا شَرَوْا بِهِ أَنفُسَهُمْ
لَوْ كَانُوا يَعْلَمُونَ﴾.

And they followed [instead] what the devils related [falsely, concerning magic] during the reign of Sulimān (Solomon). It was not Sulimān who disbelieved, but the devils did, teaching people magic and that which was revealed to the two angels, Hārūt and Mārūt at Babylon. The two angels would not teach anyone unless they had said, 'We are only a trial, so do not disbelieve [by learning magic from us']. And yet they [the people] learn from them that by which they cause separation between a man and his wife. But they cannot harm anyone through it except by Allāh's permission. And they learn that which harms them and does not benefit them. And they knew for sure, that he who purchased it [magic] would have no share in the hereafter. And indeed, wretched is that for which they sold themselves, if only they knew. (al-Baqarah: 102).

Blowing upon knots[1] is also a form of sorcery. Allāh (ﷻ) says,

1- This is an old form of witchcraft known in the Arabian Peninsula. (Translator)



Say, 'I seek refuge in [Allāh] the Lord of daybreak. From the evil of that which He has created. And from the evil of the darkness of the night when it is intense. And from the evil of those who practise witchcraft by blowing upon knots. And from the evil of an envier when he envies. (al-Falaq: 1-5).

2- Astrology:

This means taking the study of the movements of stars or other heavenly body as a premise to predict occurrence or otherwise of certain incidents on the earth. According to Ibn 'Abbās (رضي الله عنهما), Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said,

(من اقتبس علماً من النجوم فقد اقتبس شعبة من السحر زاد ما زاد).

"Whoever learns a branch of astrology has acquired a branch of sorcery. And if he should go further in learning it, he would also be adding to what he acquires of sorcery[1]". (*Abū Dawūd*: 3905).

3- Predicting on the basis of purported restraint from a bird or manifestation of a sign in drawn lines:

Qaṭan bin Qabīṣah narrated on the authority of his father who said, I heard the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) saying,

1- Or of the sin of a sorcerer. See: Al-Manāwi, *Faiḍ al-Qadīr* vol. vi p. 80. (Translator)

(العيافة والطيرة والطرق من الجبت).

***Al-'Iyāfah*, *al-Tiyarah* (Premonition, or evil omen etc.) *and al-Ṭarq* are all makings of the Devil (i.e. they are all magic).**

(*Abū Dāwūd*: 3907; *Musnad Aḥmad* vol. iii, p. 477).

Al-'Iyāfah is any alleged restraint from birds, as well as optimism or pessimism on account of their names, sounds or passage.

Al-Ṭarq means magical lines, which are usually drawn on sand, or pebble-casting for the purpose of claiming the knowledge of unseen.

4- Fortune-telling:

This is another way of making undue claims of knowing the unseen. The origin of this practice goes back to what some *jinn* eavesdrop from angels, and is later passed to fortune-tellers. Abu Hurairah (ﷺ) reported a saying of Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) that:

(من أتى كاهناً فصدّقه بما يقول فقد كفر بما أنــزل على محمد).

"Whoever goes to a fortune-teller and believes in what he tells- then he has disbelieved in what was revealed to Muḥammad".

(*Abu Dāwūd*: 3904; *Musnad Aḥmad* vol. ii, p. 429; *al-Mustadrak* vol. i, p. 50[1]).

5- Writing *Abajad* alphabet:

Another magical practice, which involves giving each letter of the alphabet certain digits of numbers. A sorcerer then applies such numbers mathematically on names of human beings, places or times, and consequently predicts the fortune or misfortune of the parties concerned.

1- This *ḥadīth*, according to both Ḥākim and Dhahabi, is *ṣaḥīḥ*, conforming to the standards set by both Bukhāri and Muslim.

Ibn 'Abbās (رضي الله عنهما) said of the perpetrators of this kind of sorcery and those who gaze at stars[1], "I couldn't see how such people can have any share [of mercy] in the sight of Allāh". (*Musannaf 'AbdulRazzāq* vol. xi, p. 26).

6- Palmistry, cup reading[2], etc., are other fraudulent methods being employed by some to claim the knowledge of what befalls people in future, such as death and life, poverty and wealth, health and illness, and so on.

7- Necromancy:

The practitioners here allege that they can bring back the souls of the dead and ask them questions pertaining to the afterlife blessing, punishment, etc. This is another scope of quackery and Satanic sorcery, aimed at nothing save distortion of people's creed and promotion of immorality. It is also a ploy to deceive the uninformed people and unjustly consume their wealth, as well as a means of claiming the knowledge of unseen.

1- i.e. for magical purposes as mentioned in '2' above. (Translator)

2- Cup reading is another dubious art of fortunetelling known in some parts of the world. As in palmistry, a cup-reading fortune-teller depends on the configuration of lines and bumps in an almost empty coffee cup to determine the fortune or otherwise of his client. (Translator)

8- Evil omen:

This implies having a premonition of something bad to befall one on account of what he had seen of the movement of birds, antelopes etc. either from his right-hand to the left or vice-versa. Such a practice is another form of polytheism, and a Satan's force of terror.

According to 'Imrān bin Huṣain (ﷺ), the Prophet (ﷺ) has said, (ليس منّا من تطيّر أو تُطيِّر له، أو تكهّن أو تُكهِّن له، أو سحر أو سُحر له، ومن أتى كاهناً فصدّقه بما يقول فقد كفر بما أُنـــزل على محمد).

"He is not of us[1]; who himself believes in evil omen or allows such to be introduced to him by another person; or who acts as a fortune-teller or has his own fortune told by another person; or employs magic or asks others to use it for him. And Whoever goes to a fortune-teller and believes in what he tells- then he has disbelieved in what was revealed to Muḥammad". (*Musnad al-Bazzār* vol ix, p.52 *ḥadīth* no. 3578[2]).

We beseech Allāh for an improvement in the [spiritual] conditions of the Muslims. May He bestow on them good understanding of their religion, and protect them from the deceit of criminals and collaborators of the devils.

1- i.e. His practice is alien to ours as true believers in Allāh (ﷻ).

2- The narrators, according to al-Haithami, are men of the *ṣaḥīḥ ḥadīths*. (al-Haithami, *Majma' al-Zawāid vol.v*, p. 117.

Chapter Three: Oneness of Allāh Regarding His Names and Attributes (*Tawḥīd al-Asmā' wa al-Ṣifāt*)

Preamble: The belief in Allāh's Names and Attributes and its impact on the Muslim

3.1 Definiton and proofs.

3.1.1 Definition.

3.1.2 The proper method of establishing this belief.

3.1.3 Proofs of this method.

3.2 Practical examples in the light of the Qur'ān and the *Sunnah*.

3.3 Some principles regarding Allāh's Names and Attributes.

Preamble: The belief in Allāh's Names and Attributes and its impact on the Muslim

Believing in Allāh's Names and Attributes has enormous influence both on the soul of a Muslim as well as on his worship of the Lord (Allāh). The impact includes that feeling he has in the course of his engagement in heart-related devotion to Allāh, which makes him rely on Allāh and be mindful of his physical and mental actions. He will also gain control of his thoughts; and thus, think only of what pleases Allāh, and loves anyone or anything strictly for His sake alone. His hearing and sight will all be in accordance with Allāh's commandments, and yet, he will be full of hope for Allāh's Mercy and has a fair thought concerning Him.

All these and other concepts relating to the belief in the meanings of Allāh's Names and Attributes cause one to offer both noticeable and unnoticeable acts of worship to Allāh. Worshippers are, however, not the same in this regard(1), and that is a favour of Allāh which He bestows on whoever He likes.

The great impact of Allāh's Name '*Al-Ghaffār*' (the Oft-forgiving) for instance, manifests in the love one has for Him, and the ceaseless hope he shows for His Mercy.

The impact of Allāh's Name '*Shadīd al-'Iqāb*' (The One who is stern in punishment) is so enormous that one would fear Him and never dare to break His laws. Similarly, all other Names or Attributes

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1- That is in the intensity of each worshiper's devotion to his/her Lord. (Translator)

of Allāh, based on what each of them denotes, have impacts on the soul of a Muslim as well as on the level of his compliance with Allāh's law. That further gives rise to hearty love for Allāh; the basis of Muslim's happiness in this world and the world to come, the key to every success, and the most valuable assistance one could get regarding the worship of his Lord in the most accurate manner. The degree of such love for Allāh determines how easy or tedious the physical acts of worship become for a worshipper.

Perfecting an act of worship or improving it in accordance with the wish of Allāh depends on the hearty love one has for Him, which is also contingent on knowing Him by His Names and Attributes. No wonder the Messengers of Allāh worshiped Him most, since their love and knowledge of Him surpass those of any other human being.

3.1 Definition and proofs of the belief in Allāh's Names and Attributes

3.1.1 Definition:

It is to believe in any name or attribute ascribed to Allāh, either by Himself or by His Messenger (ﷺ), and to absolve Him from such names or attributes which He or His Messenger has declared as not befitting Him (ﷻ). This also entails acknowledging the true meaning or indication of any divine Name or Attribute, as well as bearing in mind its impacts and implications on Allāh's creatures.

3.1.2 The proper method of establishing this belief:

That is to believe absolutely and decisively in whatever term either Allāh or His Messenger has used to describe Him, with neither distortion, nor negation, nor subjecting such terms to descriptive designation (i.e. *takyīf*) or anthropomorphic explanation (i.e. *tamthīl*).

Distortion means alteration or misrepresentation of something, and it is done in two ways:

1- Literal or Physical distortion, by adding something to a word, deleting part of it, or changing a vowel sign in it. An example of this occurs in the following verse:

﴿ٱلرَّحْمَٰنُ عَلَى ٱلْعَرْشِ ٱسْتَوَىٰ﴾.

[Allāh] the Most Gracious rose over the Throne. (Ṭā-Hā: 5).

Some people distort the word '*istawā*' (He rose over…) in this verse to mean *istawlā* (He took possession of …).

The author of *al-Nūniyyah* [a well-known literary masterpiece] thus commented saying,

نون اليهود ولام جهمي هما في وحي رب العرش زائدتان

"The letter 'N' which the Jews inserted[1], and the 'L'[2] being inserted by the Jahmites[3] are both additions to the revelation of the Lord of the Throne"

2- Abstract distortion, by twisting a word to mean something different from what Allāh and His Messenger intended by it. An instance of this is the interpretation by some, of "Hand" with respect to Allāh as either His Power or Blessing. Such a wrong interpretation, which conforms to neither religious nor linguistic rules.

Negation or "*Ta'tīl*" in Arabic is to deny Allāh's Attributes, such as a claim by some that He has no attributes at all. The difference between this and the earlier mentioned distortion lies in the fact that the latter involves substituting an incorrect meaning for the already misrepresented word, while denial of the intended or the correct meaning remains a common denominator in both.

Takyīf means subjecting the Attributes of Allāh to human imagination in terms of how a certain quality of His could be. Some erring individuals or groups try to give descriptive explanation of Allāh's Attributes and thus claim that His Hand, or His being above the Throne is in this or in that manner etc. This, indeed, is an undue claim, for the state of Allāh's Attributes is known only to Him; it is beyond what a human being can comprehend.

1- Cf. commentaries on ayahs 58 and 59 from surat al- Baqarah. (Translator)

2- i.e. (استوى - استولى).

3- The Jahmites are those who deny Names or Attributes of Allāh (ﷻ). (Translator)

Tamthīl is to compare Allāh (ﷻ) to His creatures, such as saying that He has hearing or face that are similar to ours. Far exalted is He above such a similitude.

The correct method applicable regarding Allāh's Names and Attributes has three fundamental rules, fulfillment of which is enough to guarantee safety from any deviation in this respect. These are:

1- Eliminating any anthropomorphic element in our conception of Allāh's Qualities. In other words, none of Allāh's Attributes should be likened to that of His creation.

2- Believing in any Name or Attribute ascribed to Allāh either by Himself or by His Messenger, in a manner that suits His Sublimity and Majesty.

3- To have no aspiration to comprehend the actual condition of Allāh's Attributes, as it is impossible for a created being to know this.

True implementation of those rules indicates genuine establishment of faith regarding the Names and Attributes of Almighty Allāh, and in line with the principles laid down by the worthy scholars of Islam.

3.1.3 Proofs of the Method:

The Qur'ānic proofs in this regard, and precisely, as related to the first of the above mentioned rules include:

﴿لَيۡسَ كَمِثۡلِهِۦ شَيۡءٞۖ وَهُوَ ٱلسَّمِيعُ ٱلۡبَصِيرُ﴾.

"There is nothing like unto Him, and He is the Hearing, the Seeing". (al-Shūrā: 11).

This verse deplores resemblance of any kind between the Creator and what He has created, and yet ascribes hearing and sight to Him. The import therefore is that, although many creatures likewise possess the sense of hearing and the ability to see, in no circumstances could the Hearing or Sight of Almighty Allāh be similar to those of His creatures. This is also applicable to all other Attributes of Allāh (ﷻ). One may read, for instance, the following verse where Allāh (ﷻ) says,

﴿قَدْ سَمِعَ ٱللَّهُ قَوْلَ ٱلَّتِى تُجَٰدِلُكَ فِى زَوْجِهَا وَتَشْتَكِىٓ إِلَى ٱللَّهِ وَٱللَّهُ يَسْمَعُ تَحَاوُرَكُمَآ ۚ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ سَمِيعٌۢ بَصِيرٌ﴾

Allāh has heard the speech of the one who argues[1] with you concerning her husband and directs her complaint to Allāh. And Allāh hears your dialogue; Indeed, Allāh hears and sees [all things]. (al-Mujādilah: 1).

In his commentary on this ayah, Ibn Kathīr mentioned a remark[2] made by 'Āisha (رضي الله عنها) who had said, "Praise be to Allāh whose Hearing covers every voice. That woman [referred to in the ayah above] has spoken to the Prophet (ﷺ) while I was just in a corner of the house but could not hear their conversation. Yet Allāh (ﷻ) revealed a revelation which says, **"Allāh has heard the speech of the one who argues with you concerning her husband ...[3]"**.

Another Qur'ānic proof in this regard is:

1- i.e. pleads.

2- As reported by both Bukhāri (in the Book of *Tawḥīd* vol. xiii p. 372) and Aḥmad (in *al-Musnad* vol. vi p. 46).

3- Ibn Kathīr, *al-Tafsīr* vol. viii p. 60.

﴿ فَلَا تَضۡرِبُواْ لِلَّهِ ٱلۡأَمۡثَالَۚ ﴾.

So do not coin similitudes for Allāh. (al-Naḥl: 74). Ṭabari said, i.e. "Do not assert similarities to Allāh, nor set up equals for Him. Definitely, nothing is similar or identical to Him".

Allāh has also said,

﴿ هَلۡ تَعۡلَمُ لَهُۥ سَمِيّٗا ﴾.

Do you know of any who is similar to Him? (Maryam: 65).
That is to say, according to Ibn 'Abbās (رضي الله عنهما), "Do you know of any co-equal or peer for the Lord"?

In another verse, Allāh (ﷻ) says,

﴿ وَلَمۡ يَكُن لَّهُۥ كُفُوًا أَحَدُۢ ﴾.

And there is no any equivalent to Him. (al-Ikhlāṣ: 4).
According to Ṭabāri, this verse means, "Nothing resembles Him, and neither Has he got an equivalent nor anything comparable to Him".

As for the proofs concerning the second rule, (i.e. Believing in any Name or Attribute ascribed to Allāh either by Himself or by His Messenger), Allāh (ﷻ) has said,

﴿ ٱللَّهُ لَآ إِلَٰهَ إِلَّا هُوَ ٱلۡحَيُّ ٱلۡقَيُّومُۚ لَا تَأۡخُذُهُۥ سِنَةٞ وَلَا نَوۡمٞۚ لَّهُۥ مَا فِي ٱلسَّمَٰوَٰتِ وَمَا فِي ٱلۡأَرۡضِۗ مَن ذَا ٱلَّذِي يَشۡفَعُ عِندَهُۥٓ إِلَّا بِإِذۡنِهِۦۚ يَعۡلَمُ مَا بَيۡنَ أَيۡدِيهِمۡ وَمَا خَلۡفَهُمۡۖ وَلَا يُحِيطُونَ بِشَيۡءٖ مِّنۡ عِلۡمِهِۦٓ إِلَّا بِمَا شَآءَۚ وَسِعَ كُرۡسِيُّهُ ٱلسَّمَٰوَٰتِ وَٱلۡأَرۡضَۖ وَلَا يَـُٔودُهُۥ حِفۡظُهُمَاۚ وَهُوَ ٱلۡعَلِيُّ ٱلۡعَظِيمُ ﴾.

Allāh -there is no deity worthy of worship but He, the Ever-Living, Who sustains and protects all beings. Neither drowsiness overtakes him nor sleep. To Him belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth. Who is he that can intercede with Him except by His permission? He knows that

which is in front of them and that which is behind them, and they encompass nothing of His Knowledge except for what He wills. His *Kursi*[1] extends over the heavens and the earth, and He is never weary of preserving them. And He is the Most High, the Most Great. (al-Baqarah: 255).

﴿ هُوَ ٱلْأَوَّلُ وَٱلْءَاخِرُ وَٱلظَّٰهِرُ وَٱلْبَاطِنُ ۖ وَهُوَ بِكُلِّ شَىْءٍ عَلِيمٌ ﴾.

He [Allāh] is the First and the Last, the Predominant and the Intimate, and He knows all things. (al-Ḥadīd: 3).

﴿ هُوَ ٱللَّهُ ٱلَّذِى لَآ إِلَٰهَ إِلَّا هُوَ ۖ عَٰلِمُ ٱلْغَيْبِ وَٱلشَّهَٰدَةِ ۖ هُوَ ٱلرَّحْمَٰنُ ٱلرَّحِيمُ ﴿٢٢﴾ هُوَ ٱللَّهُ ٱلَّذِى لَآ إِلَٰهَ إِلَّا هُوَ ٱلْمَلِكُ ٱلْقُدُّوسُ ٱلسَّلَٰمُ ٱلْمُؤْمِنُ ٱلْمُهَيْمِنُ ٱلْعَزِيزُ ٱلْجَبَّارُ ٱلْمُتَكَبِّرُ ۚ سُبْحَٰنَ ٱللَّهِ عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ ﴿٢٣﴾ هُوَ ٱللَّهُ ٱلْخَٰلِقُ ٱلْبَارِئُ ٱلْمُصَوِّرُ ۖ لَهُ ٱلْأَسْمَآءُ ٱلْحُسْنَىٰ ۚ يُسَبِّحُ لَهُۥ مَا فِى ٱلسَّمَٰوَٰتِ وَٱلْأَرْضِ ۖ وَهُوَ ٱلْعَزِيزُ ٱلْحَكِيمُ ﴾.

He is Allāh besides whom there is no deity worthy of worship, the One who Knows the invisible and the visible, and He is the Entirely Merciful, the Especially Merciful. He is Allāh besides whom there is no deity worthy of worship, the Sovereign, the Holy, Who is free from defects, the Keeper of Faith[2], The Watcher over His creatures, the Almighty, the Compeller, the Supreme; glory be to Allāh [exalted is He] above what they associate [with Him]. He is Allāh, the Creator, the Originator, the Maker of all shapes, His are the best Names. Whatever is in the heavens and the earth glorifies Him, and He is the Almighty, the All-Wise. (al-Ḥashr: 22-24).

1- *Kursi* literally means chair. Allāh's *Kursi* is, however, different from His *'Arsh* (Throne). (Translator)

2- i.e. who confirms the missions of His Messengers, cf. Tafsīr al-Sa'dy. (Translator)

Proofs in this regard from the *Sunnah* include a narration by Abu Hurairah (ﷺ), as reported by Muslim in his *saḥīḥ*[1]. He said, "The Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) used to command us to recite the following prayer whenever we are about to sleep:

(اللهم رب السماوات ورب الأرض ورب العرش العظيم. ربنا ورب كل شيء، فالق الحب والنوى، ومنزل التوراة والإنجيل والفرقان، أعوذ بك من شر كل دابة أنت آخذ بناصيتها. اللهم أنت الأول فليس قبلك شيء، وأنت الآخر فليس بعدك شيء، وأنت الظاهر فليس فوقك شيء، وأنت الباطن فليس دونك شيء، اقض عنا الدّين وأغننا من الفقر).

'O Allāh! The Lord of the heavens, the earth and the magnificent Throne. Our Lord and the Lord of all things; the Splitter of the grain of corn and the date stone; the Revealer of the Torah, the *Injīl* (Gospel) and the Criterion (i.e. the Qur'ān). I seek refuge in You from the evil of every living thing that You take hold of its forelock[2]. O Allāh! You are the First, nothing is before You; You are the Last, after You there is nothing; You are the Predominant, and nothing is above You; You are the Intimate, and nothing is closer than You. Remove for us the burden of debt and relieve us from want'." (*Muslim*: 2713). There are many other textual proofs in this regard.

Concerning the third rule (To have no Aspiration of comprehending the actual condition of Allāh's Attributes), the proofs include Almighty Allāh's saying:

1- The *ḥadīth* compilations of both Bukhāri and Muslim are known as *ṣaḥīḥ*. (Translator)

2- i.e. You have perfect control over it. (Translator)

﴿ يَعْلَمُ مَا بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَمَا خَلْفَهُمْ وَلَا يُحِيطُونَ بِهِۦ عِلْمًا ﴾.

He [Allāh] knows all that is before them and all that is behind them, while they do not encompass Him in knowledge. (Ṭā-Hā: 110). A Muslim scholar has explained the meaning of this ayah by saying, "Human knowledge cannot envelop the Lord of the heavens and the earth; all sorts of comprehension regarding how exactly the Qualities of Allāh could be, should therefore be refuted".

Some other Qur'ānic proofs in this respect include:

﴿ لَّا تُدْرِكُهُ ٱلْأَبْصَٰرُ وَهُوَ يُدْرِكُ ٱلْأَبْصَٰرَ ﴾.

No vision perceives Him, but He perceives all vision. (al-An'ām: 103). Another scholar says in his remark on the meaning of this verse, "This shows how perfect is Allāh's Majesty, and that He is greater than all things. It further clarifies that, owing to the perfection of His Sublimity, He cannot be perceived in an encompassing manner. An encompassing perception of something is more than the mere seeing of that thing. Hence, Allāh shall be seen in the hereafter but not in an encompassing manner, just as one could know Him, but could never have a total knowledge of Him".

Every right-minded person should therefore realize that the extent the human intellect could go has a limit, just as one's hearing and seeing abilities are not unlimited. Caring to know whatever is beyond human comprehension, such as the actual condition of Allāh's Attributes, is like taking upon oneself the desire to see what is behind a wall or to hear voices coming from a very far distance, using one's natural faculties of hearing and sight.

3.2 Practical examples on the topic, in accordance with the Qur'ān and the *Sunnah*

Proofs concerning Allāh's Nnames and Attributes either in the Glorious Book of Allāh or the *Sunnah* of His Prophet (ﷺ) are enormous. These have also been expressed in a variety of ways and contexts, and indeed, many of His Names and Attributes are mentioned in both sources. Books and other academic works on this subject are also available; whatever we are going to mention in the following pages are, therefore, mere examples.

A: NAMES

Almighty Allāh's Names include '***Al-Ḥayy***' **and** '***Al-Qayyūm***', (The Ever-Living and the One who sustains and protects all beings) and both have been mentioned in the Qur'ān and the *Sunnah*. Allāh says,

﴿ ٱللَّهُ لَآ إِلَٰهَ إِلَّا هُوَ ٱلْحَىُّ ٱلْقَيُّومُ ﴾.

Allāh -there is no deity worthy of worship but He, the Ever-Living, Who sustains and protects all beings. (al-Baqarah: 255).

As for evidence from the *Sunnah*, Anas bin Mālik (ﷺ) narrated saying,

كنا مع النبي ﷺ في حلقة ورجل قائم يصلي فلما ركع وسجد وتشهد ودعا فقال في دعائه: اللهم إني أسألك بأن لك الحمد لا إله إلا أنت بديع السماوات والأرض يا ذا الجلال والإكرام يا حي يا قيوم. فقال النبي ﷺ: (لقد دعا باسم الله الأعظم الذي إذا دعي به أجاب وإذا سئل به أعطى).

"We were in a gathering with the Prophet (ﷺ), while a man was standing perfoming *ṣalāh*. After the man had bowed, prostrated and recited the *Tashahhud*[1] he supplicated saying, "O Allāh! I beseech You in Your capacity as the One to whom praise is due. There is no deity worthy of worship except You, the Originator of the heavens and the earth. O [Allāh] the Mighty and Glorious. O [Allāh] the Ever-Living, the Sustainer and Protector of all beings". The Prophet (ﷺ) then remarked, **"This man has invoked Allāh with the greatest of His Names. Whoever invokes Him using this Name, his supplication will be answered, and his request be granted".** (*Ḥākim, al-Mustadrak, ḥadīth* no. 1856[2]).

Another name is ***Al-Hamīd*** (The Praiseworthy). Allāh says,

﴿وَٱعۡلَمُوٓاْ أَنَّ ٱللَّهَ غَنِيٌّ حَمِيدٌ﴾.

And know that Allāh is Rich (Free of need), Praiseworthy. (al-Baqarah: 267).

Similarly, the *ḥadīth* of *Tashahhud* as narrated by Ka'b bin 'Ujrah serves as another proof here. According to the narrator, the Prophet (ﷺ) has taught them to say,

1- *Tashahhud* is that special form of supplication, which one recites during prayer in a sitting position after every two units (*raka'ats*). (Translator)

2- A *ṣaḥīḥ ḥadīth* conforming to the Muslim's standard, said al-Ḥākim. al-Dhahabi also supported this view.

(اللهم صلِّ على محمد وعلى آل محمد كما صليت على إبراهيم وعلى آل إبراهيم إنك حميد مجيد...).

"O Allāh! May Your blessing be upon Muḥammad and the family of Muḥammad, as it had been on Ibrāhīm and the family of Ibrāhīm. Indeed, You are Praiseworthy, Glorious". (*Bukhāri*: 3370; *Muslim*: 406).

- ***Al-Raḥmān and Al-Raḥīm***: (The Entirely Merciful and the Especially Merciful).

Allāh (ﷻ) says,

﴿ٱلۡحَمۡدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ ٱلۡعَٰلَمِينَ ۝٢ ٱلرَّحۡمَٰنِ ٱلرَّحِيمِ﴾.

[All] praise is [due] to Allāh, Lord of all beings. The Entirely Merciful, the Especially Merciful. (al-Fātiḥah: 2,3).

It is also on record that on the Day of *Ḥudaibiyyah*, when the reconciliation treaty between the Muslims and the Meccan polytheists was being worked out, the Prophet (ﷺ) ordered his scribe to write "*Bismi Allāh al-Raḥmān al-Raḥīm*" (In the name of Allāh the Entirely Merciful, the Especially Merciful)[1].

- ***Al-Ḥalīm*** (The Most Forbearing):

Allāh says,

﴿إِنَّهُۥ كَانَ حَلِيمًا غَفُورًا﴾.

Indeed, He [Allāh] is Most-Forbearing, Most-Forgiving. (Fāṭir: 41).

1- Cf. *Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhāri*: 2731.

As for proof from the *Sunnah*, Ibn 'Abbās (رضي الله عنهما) reported that Allāh's Messenger used to say each time he was distressed,

(لا إله إلا الله العظيم الحليم...).

"There is no deity worthy of worship except Allāh, the Most Great, Most Forbearing...". (*Bukhāri*: 6345; *Muslim*: 2730).

B: ATTRIBUTES

Allāh's Attributes include:

- Ability or omnipotence (a*l-Qudrah*):

This is a personal (*dhāti*) Attribute of Allāh, firmly established in both the Qur'ān and the *Sunnah*. A *dhāti* attribute is any inherent Quality of Allāh that is in no circumstances separable from Him. As for this Attribute "*al-Qudrah*", Allāh (ﷻ) says,

﴿إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ﴾.

Indeed, Allāh is Able to do all things. (al-Baqarah: 20).

Also in the *Sunnah*, a tradition has it that 'Uthmān bin Abu al-'Āṣ (رضي الله عنه) complained, to the Prophet, of a certain ache he had been suffering in his body since he embraced Islam. The Prophet (ﷺ) said to him:

(ضع يدك على الذي تألم من جسدك، وقل: بسم الله ثلاثاً وقل سبع مرات: (أعوذ بعزة الله وقدرته من شر ما أجد وأحاذر).

"Lay your hand on that part of your body where you feel pain and then say, 'In the name of Allāh' -three times-, 'I seek refuge in the might of Allāh and His Ability, from the evil of that which I am feeling and that which I am wary of' -seven times-". (*Muslim*: 2202).

- Life (*al-Ḥayāh*):

Also a personal attribute and is derived from Allāh's Name 'Al-Ḥayy' which has been mentioned earlier together with its proofs.

- Knowledge (*al-'Ilm*):

Knowledge is another personal attribute for Allāh duly confirmed in the Qur'ān and *Sunnah*. Allāh says,

﴿وَلَا يُحِيطُونَ بِشَيْءٍ مِّنْ عِلْمِهِۦٓ﴾.

And they encompass nothing of His Knowledge. (al-Baqarah: 255).

From the *Sunnah*, Jābir bin 'Abdullah (رضي الله عنهما) reported that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) used to teach them to say as part of the supplication for *Istikhārah*[1],

(اللهم إني أستخيرك بعلمك وأستقدرك بقدرتك ...).

"O Allāh! I ask You to choose for me the best [in accordance] with Your Knowledge; and with Your Ability, I seek the capability [for such]". (*Bukhāri*: 6382).

- Will, volition, etc. (*al-Irādah*):

This is also one of Allāh's Attributes confirmed in both the Qur'ān and the *Sunnah*. Allāh's Will is a *fi'ly* (act-related) attribute. In other words, it is counted among those attributes relating especially to His Volition and Ability. Thus, whether He exercises such Qualities or not at any given time or situation depends absolutely on His Will and Volition. Allāh says,

1- i.e. the special supplication for seeking guidance from Allāh before making important decisions or when one is in perplexing situations. (Translator)

﴿فَمَن يُرِدِ ٱللَّهُ أَن يَهْدِيَهُۥ يَشْرَحْ صَدْرَهُۥ لِلْإِسْلَٰمِ ۖ وَمَن يُرِدْ أَن يُضِلَّهُۥ يَجْعَلْ صَدْرَهُۥ ضَيِّقًا حَرَجًا كَأَنَّمَا يَصَّعَّدُ فِى ٱلسَّمَآءِ﴾.

So whoever it is Allāh's Will to guide He expands his breast to [contain] Islam, and whoever it is His Will to send astray He makes his breast tight and constricted, as if he were climbing into the sky. (al-An'ām: 125).

Similarly, 'Abdullah bin 'Umar (رضي الله عنهما), reported that he heard Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) saying,

(إذا أراد الله بقوم عذاباً، أصاب العذاب من كان فيهم ثم بعثوا على أعمالهم).

"If Allāh wants to punish a nation, the punishment falls on all its members (indiscriminately), then on the Day of Resurrection, each of them will be resurrected as per his/her deeds". (*Muslim*: 2879).

- Highness or Being above (*al-'Uluww*)

This, as well, is a personal (*dhāti*) Attribute for Allāh, firmly established in both the Qur'ān and the *Sunnah*. Allāh says,

﴿سَبِّحِ ٱسْمَ رَبِّكَ ٱلْأَعْلَى﴾.

Glorify the Name of your Lord, the Most High. (al-A'lā: 1).

He has also described His angels in another verse saying,

﴿يَخَافُونَ رَبَّهُم مِّن فَوْقِهِمْ﴾.

They fear their Lord above them. (al-Naḥl: 50).

A *ḥadīth* narrated by Abu Hurairah (ﷺ), which we have quoted earlier in this book, also contains proof for this Attribute. The *ḥadīth* says,

(... اللهم أنت الأول فليس قبلك شيء وأنت الآخر فليس بعدك شيء وأنت الظاهر فليس فوقك شيء وأنت الباطن فليس دونك شيء ...).

"...O Allāh! You are the First, nothing is before You. You are the Last, after You there is nothing. You are the Predominant, and nothing is above You. You are the Intimate, and nothing is closer than You ...". (*Muslim*: 2713).

- His being over the Throne (*al-Istiwā'*):

Another act-related Attribute of Allāh, confirmed in the Glorious Book and the *Sunnah*. Allāh says,

﴿ٱلرَّحْمَٰنُ عَلَى ٱلْعَرْشِ ٱسْتَوَىٰ﴾.

[Allāh] the Most Merciful rose over the Throne. (Ṭā-Hā: 5).

According to Qatādah bin al-Nu'mān (ﷺ), Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) also said,

(لما فرغ الله من خلقه استوى على عرشه).

"When Allāh had finished creating His creatures He rose over His Throne". (Dhahabi, *al-'Uluww ḥadīth* no. 119[1]).

The word "*Istiwā*" in the Arabic language means: being above, ascension, rising up and settlement. Allāh's *Istiwā'*, however, is strictly in a manner that befits His Majesty.

- Talk and Talking (*al-Kalām*):

Talking, with respect to Allāh, is a personal Attribute as far as the talking ability itself is concerned, but an act-related one with regard to each and every Word spoken by Him. Allāh (ﷻ) therefore, speaks audibly whenever and in whatever manner He likes. The proofs establishing this Quality for Allāh in the Qur'ān and the *Sunnah* include the following:

1- The author, al-Dhahabi, said, "Its narrators are reliable", and the *ḥadīth* was also recorded by al-Khallāl in his book called *'al-Sunnah'*.

﴿وَكَلَّمَ ٱللَّهُ مُوسَىٰ تَكْلِيمًا﴾.

And to Mūsa (Moses) Allāh spoke directly. (al-Nisā': 164).

﴿وَلَمَّا جَآءَ مُوسَىٰ لِمِيقَٰتِنَا وَكَلَّمَهُۥ رَبُّهُۥ قَالَ رَبِّ أَرِنِىٓ أَنظُرْ إِلَيْكَ﴾.

And when Mūsa came at the time and place We have appointed, and his Lord [Allāh] spoke to him, he said, 'My Lord! Show me [Yourself] that I may look at You'. (al-A'rāf: 143).

Abu Hurairah (ﷺ) narrated that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said,

(احتج آدم وموسى فقال له موسى: يا آدم أنت أبونا خيّبتنا وأخرجتنا من الجنة. قال لـه آدم: يا موسى اصطفاك الله بكلامه وخط لك التوراة بيده ...).

"Ādam and Mūsa engaged in a debate, and the latter said, 'O Ādam, you are our progenitor; you were the cause of our failure and our being driven out of Paradise'. Ādam also responded, 'O Mūsa, Allāh did select you to [receive the privilege of] being spoken to directly by Him, and He also wrote for you the Torah with His own Hand' ..." (*Bukhāri*: 6614; *Muslim*: 2652).

- Countenance or Face (*al-Wajhu*):

Allāh's Face is both personal as well as textual (*khabari*)[1] Attribute, duly confirmed in the Qur'ān and the *Sunnah*. Allāh says,

﴿وَمَا تُنفِقُونَ إِلَّا ٱبْتِغَآءَ وَجْهِ ٱللَّهِ﴾.

And you do not spend except seeking the Countenance of Allāh. (al-Baqarah: 272).

1- The *khabari* Attributes of Allāh are those that the Muslims rely solely on textual evidence from either the Qur'ān or the *Sunnah* for their confirmation or otherwise. Thus, we must believe in such Attributes as long as there is proof for them, even if we fail to find logical justification for them based on our limited human imagination. (Translator)

﴿ وَيَبْقَىٰ وَجْهُ رَبِّكَ ذُو الْجَلَالِ وَالْإِكْرَامِ ﴾.

And there will remain the Face of your Lord, Owner of Majesty and Honour. (al-Raḥmān: 27).

Jabir bin 'Abdullah (رضي الله عنهما) narrated saying,

(لما نزلت هذه الآية: ﴿ قُلْ هُوَ الْقَادِرُ عَلَىٰ أَن يَبْعَثَ عَلَيْكُمْ عَذَابًا مِّن فَوْقِكُمْ ﴾، قال النبي ﷺ: أعوذ بوجهك. فقال: ﴿ أَوْ مِن تَحْتِ أَرْجُلِكُمْ ﴾، فقال النبي ﷺ: أعوذ بوجهك. قال: ﴿ أَوْ يَلْبِسَكُمْ شِيَعًا ﴾ فقال النبي ﷺ: هذا أيسر).

"At the revelation of this Qur'ānic verse **'Say, He is the [only One] who has power to send upon you punishment from above you'**, the Prophet (ﷺ) said, **"I seek refuge in Your Face"**. Then Allāh said, **'Or from beneath your feet'**, and the Prophet (ﷺ) said, **"I seek refuge in Your Face"**. Then Allāh said, **"Or to cover you with confusion in party strife"**. [(al-An'ām: 65)] and the Prophet (ﷺ) said, **"[Anyway,] this is less [severe]"**. (*Bukhāri*: 7406).

- The Two Hands (*al-Yadān*):

The two Hands for Allāh (ﷻ) are also personal-textual attributes, firmly established in the Qur'ān and the *Sunnah*. Allāh says,

﴿ بَلْ يَدَاهُ مَبْسُوطَتَانِ يُنفِقُ كَيْفَ يَشَاءُ ﴾.

Rather, both His Hands are extended [in bounty]. He gives as He pleases. (al- Mā'idah: 64).

﴿ قَالَ يَا إِبْلِيسُ مَا مَنَعَكَ أَن تَسْجُدَ لِمَا خَلَقْتُ بِيَدَيَّ ﴾.

He (Allāh) said, 'O *Iblīs* [Satan]! What prevented you from prostrating before that which I have created with My both Hands'? (Ṣād: 75).

Proofs of this from the *Sunnah* include a *ḥadīth* transmitted by Muslim on the authority of Abū Mūsa al-Ash'ari (ﷺ) who quoted Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) as saying,

(إن الله يبسط يده بالليل ليتوب مسيء النهار، ويبسط يده بالنهار ليتوب مسيء الليل حتى تطلع الشمس من مغربها).

Allāh stretches out His Hand during the night, so that people may repent for their shortcomings committed during the day. He also stretches out His Hand during the day, so that sinners may repent for the sins committed during the night. Until the sun rises in the west[1]. (*Muslim*: 2759).

- The Two Eyes (*al-'Aynān*):

Allāh's two Eyes as confirmed in both the Qur'ān and the *Sunnah,* also constitute some of His personal-textual Attributes. Allāh says,

﴿ وَلِتُصْنَعَ عَلَىٰ عَيْنِيٓ ﴾.

In order that you [Mūsa] may be brought up under My Eye. (Ṭā-Hā: 39).

He also said to His other Prophet, Nūḥ (ﷺ):

﴿ وَٱصْنَعِ ٱلْفُلْكَ بِأَعْيُنِنَا ﴾.

And construct the ship under Our Eyes. (Hūd: 37).

As for proofs from the *Sunnah*, a *ḥadīth* narrated by 'Abdullah bin 'Umar (رضي الله عنهما) has it that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said,

1- The rising of the sun in the west is a major portent of the Day of Resurrection. (Translator)

(إن الله لا يَخفى عليكم إن الله ليس بأعور وأشار بيده إلى عينيه، وإن المسيح الدجال أعور العين اليمنى كأنّ عينه عنبة طافية).

"You are well aware of [the Qualities of] Allāh. Indeed, Allāh is not one-eyed -the Prophet pointed to his own eyes [and then said]- **The *Masīḥ Dajjāl* (Antichrist) is deprived of his right eye; his eye looking like a protruding berry of grapes".** (*Bukhāri*: 7407; *Muslim*: 2933).

- Foot (*Al-Qadam*):

Here is another personal (*dhāti*) Attribute of Allāh, in accordance with proofs from the traditions of the Prophet (ﷺ). In one of those *ḥadīths* narrated by Abū Hurairah (ﷺ), the Prophet (ﷺ) said while speaking of an argument between Paradise and Hellfire,

(... فأما النار فلا تمتلئ حتى يضع الله تبارك وتعالى رجله. تقول قط قط قط فهنالك تمتلئ ويزوي بعضها إلى بعض ...).

"As for the Fire, it will not be filled up until Allāh puts His Leg. Then the Fire will say, 'enough, enough, enough' and at that moment it will become filled; with its different parts coming closer to each other". (*Bukhāri*: 4850; *Muslim*: 2846).

In some other versions of the same *ḥadīth* which are also recorded in the books of Bukhāri and Muslim, the wording goes thus,

(فيضع قدمه عليها ...).

"At that point, Allāh will put His Foot over it [Fire]". (*Bukhāri*: 4848, 4849; *Muslim*: 2848).

Names and Attributes of Allāh as mentioned in the Glorious Book and the *Sunnah* are innumerable; the above mentioned ones are, therefore,

mere examples. Generally, every Muslim should see those Names and Attributes as belonging to Allāh in a manner that suits His Majesty and Perfection, and state them as exactly as either Allāh or His Messenger (ﷺ) has done in the Qur'ān and the *Sunnah*. It is indisputable that Allāh knows about Himself more than any of His creation would know. Similarly, the knowledge of His Messenger (ﷺ) in this respect surpasses that of any other creature. The Messenger (ﷺ) is also the most sincere mentor, and the most fluent, eloquent and God-fearing person. Care must therefore be taken to avoid either denial of Allāh's Attributes or comparing them to those of His creation, for **Nothing is like Him, and He is the All-Hearing, the All-Seeing.** (al-Shūra: 11).

﴿لَيْسَ كَمِثْلِهِۦ شَىْءٌ ۖ وَهُوَ ٱلسَّمِيعُ ٱلْبَصِيرُ﴾.

3.3 Some principles regarding Almighty Allāh's Names and Attributes

a) Having a consistent approach to Allāh's Attributes and His Self or Essence

By this, we mean that Allāh is comparable to nothing in His Self, Attributes and Acts. Furthermore, since Allāh's Self is undoubtedly real and unique, His Attributes, as confirmed in the Qur'ān and the *Sunnah*, must equally be real and incomparable to any other attributes. Hence, our approach to both issues must be one and consistent.

As Allāh's Self has never and is not being disputed by any Muslim, this principle becomes strong evidence against anyone who denies Allāh's Attributes in spite of believing in His Self. If anyone should argue that he is rejecting those attributes with a view to avoid comparing Allāh to His creatures, then the counterargument to that is to say, 'Why then have you ascribed to Allāh a real self, while you also attribute selves to His creatures; doesn't that amount to comparison, based on your initial deduction'? However, if he claims -and certainly he would- that the self he ascribes to Allāh is quite different from those of His creatures, then we ask him to apply this on His Qualities as well. Allāh's Self is indeed incomparable to any other one, but, similarly, His Attributes must also follow suit. Furthermore, if the contender should exclaim that how can he believe in an Attribute of Allāh when the actual description of such is unknown to him? The answer is to say, 'All you need to do here is the same as what you have done regarding His Self, in which you also believe, even though you do not know how exactly it is'.

b) Whatever is said regarding a particular Attribute must also be maintained with respect to the rest

This also means being consistent in what one says concerning each of Allāh's Attributes, in terms of affirmation or denial. This principle deals particularly with that group of people who believe in some of Allāh's Attributes but disbelieve in others. If anyone believes in some of Allāh's Attributes such as Life, Knowledge, Ability, Hearing, Sight, etc., but raises objection to other Qualities of His, such as Love, Satisfaction, Anger, etc., claiming that these -unlike the ones he believes in- are mere metaphorical terms. To such a person we should say, "These Attributes all belong to Allāh, and there is no basis for treating part of them differently". As you would ascribe to Allāh certain attributes such as life, knowledge, ability, hearing and sight without comparing them to similar qualities possessed by His creatures, you should also believe in the Love [for righteous acts for instance], Satisfaction and Anger which He has attributed to Himself without subjecting them to anthropomorphic explanation, or else you would be contradicting yourself.

c) Allāh's Names and Attributes are text-based

Textual evidence from the Qur'ān and the *Sunnah*, rather than reasoning, are the only source for knowing Allāh's Names and Attributes. Addition or omission of any Name or Attribute is, therefore, unacceptable, for the human reasoning cannot know on its own what the Almighty Allāh deserves in this respect. Allāh (ﷻ) has said,

﴿ وَلَا تَقْفُ مَا لَيْسَ لَكَ بِهِۦ عِلْمٌ ۚ إِنَّ ٱلسَّمْعَ وَٱلْبَصَرَ وَٱلْفُؤَادَ كُلُّ أُو۟لَٰٓئِكَ كَانَ عَنْهُ مَسْـُٔولًا ﴾.

And do not pursue that of which you have no knowledge. Surely, the hearing, the sight and the heart - about all of those [you] will be questioned. (al-Isrā': 36). This has always been the method of the leading scholars of Islam. Imam Aḥmad (رحمه الله) said, "In no other way should Allāh be described other than the way He or His Messenger have described Him. The limits set by both the Qur'ān and the *Sunnah* should not be exceeded".

In his contribution, another scholar reasoned that knowing something and subsequently being able to describe it is possible through any of the following three ways: Having seen the object itself, or its like, or through a description of it made by one who knows it. The source of our knowledge concerning Allāh (ﷻ), His Names and Attributes is confined to the third way, viz. the information we may have from someone who knows Him. No doubt, Allāh's Knowledge in this regard comes first, followed by that of His Messengers to whom He has revealed and taught His messages. It is therefore inevitable to stick to the divine revelation in knowing what is, and what is not a name or attribute of Almighty Allāh. After all, we have never seen Him in this world so that we could describe Him, neither is there something identical to Him that we may use its qualities to describe Him. Exalted and Holy is our Lord.

d) Allāh's Names are all the most beautiful

Allāh's Names are at the peak of every beauty. He says,

﴿وَلِلَّهِ ٱلْأَسْمَآءُ ٱلْحُسْنَىٰ﴾.

And to Allāh belong the most beautiful [or best] Names. (al-A'rāf: 180). This is so, because the bearer is Allāh (ﷻ), owner of the best and most honourable designation, while the Names themselves contain perfect Qualities that are totally free from defect in whatever sense.

The name *'al-Ḥayy'* (The Living) for instance, denotes a perfect and permanent life with neither a beginning nor an end; a life that presupposes many other attributes of perfection, including knowledge, ability, hearing, sight, etc.

The name *al-'Alīm* (The Knowing) on the other hand, implies an impeccable Knowledge, free from any previous ignorance or subsequent forgetfulness. Allāh says,

﴿عِلْمُهَا عِندَ رَبِّى فِى كِتَٰبٍ ۖ لَّا يَضِلُّ رَبِّى وَلَا يَنسَى﴾.

He [Mūsa] said, 'The knowledge thereof is with my Lord [kept] in a record. My Lord [Allāh] neither errs nor forgets'. (Ṭā-Hā: 52).

Such an extensive supernatural Knowledge that encompasses all things both in summary and in detail, whether they relate to Allāh's deeds or to those of His creation. He says,

﴿يَعْلَمُ خَآئِنَةَ ٱلْأَعْيُنِ وَمَا تُخْفِى ٱلصُّدُورُ﴾.

He (Allāh) knows the deception of the eyes and what the breasts conceal. (Ghāfir: 19).

The beauty in Allāh's Names manifests itself in two ways; a single name may alone reveal this beauty, or when such a name forms with another one a befitting beautiful combination, and thus adding excellence to an already existing perfection.

For example, Allāh often conjoins the names '*al-'Azīz*' (The Almighty) and '*al-Ḥakīm*' (The All-Wise) to describe Himself in the Glorious Qur'ān. Each of the two names denotes, separately, the perfect quality it naturally entails, which is might in the former, as well as wisdom and judicious decision in the latter. The combination of both names, yet indicates an additional excellent quality, as it reveals that Allāh's Might is never dissociated from wisdom. Hence, His Might brings about neither injustice nor oppression, unlike some of His creatures, who are also mighty in the human concept, but may be led to sin by arrogance, and thus become unfair in their dealings. Similarly, Allāh's Wisdom and Judgment are always characterized by His perfect Might, in contrast to prudence or judgment of any created being, which are not permanently free from inferiority. Allāh knows best.

At the close of this chapter, we would like to mention some of the benefits that a Muslim may reap through adherence to this important principle; believing in the one and only God (Allāh) and abstaining from associating partners with Him, whether in His Lordship, Divinity, Names or Attributes.

1- A believing servant of Allāh gains the bliss of this life and the life to come. Rather, Faith itself is the pre-requisite for achieving felicity in both; hence, the level of one's belief in his Lord, His Names and Attributes determines his portion of such felicity.

2- The most important factor of one's fear of Allāh and his obedience to Him is that belief he has in Him, His Names and His Attributes. The more a person grows in his knowledge of Allāh the nearer he comes in his approach to Him. He would similarly be more pious, devote more time and energy for the worship of his Lord, and be at farther distance from committing sins or violating His rules.

3- Another ripe fruit of this faith is the tranquillity, repose, security and guidance, which the believer enjoys both in this life and in the hereafter. Allāh (ﷻ) says,

﴿ ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا۟ وَتَطْمَئِنُّ قُلُوبُهُم بِذِكْرِ ٱللَّهِ ۗ أَلَا بِذِكْرِ ٱللَّهِ تَطْمَئِنُّ ٱلْقُلُوبُ ﴾.

Those who have believed, and whose hearts find rest in the remembrance of Allāh. Truly, in the remembrance of Allāh do hearts find rest. (al-Ra'd: 28).

4- The reward of the hereafter is attainable only for people with sound faith. Anyone who believes in Allāh and has fulfilled the conditions of this belief, will be rewarded in the hereafter and be admitted into Paradise, the width whereof is as the width of the heaven and the earth. The bliss of Paradise is such that no eye or hear has either seen or heard of its like, and neither has its picture come to a human mind. The believer will also be saved from Fire and its devastating punishment, and, above all, gain an everlasting pleasure of his Lord. Moreover, on the Day of Resurrection, he will enjoy looking at the noble Face of Almighty Allāh in neither distress nor trying ordeal.

5- The belief in Allāh rectifies our deeds and makes them acceptable to Him. Without Faith, all acts, no matter how various or numerous, are not acceptable to Allāh, and shall be rejected. Allāh (ﷻ) has said,

﴿وَمَن يَكْفُرْ بِٱلْإِيمَٰنِ فَقَدْ حَبِطَ عَمَلُهُۥ وَهُوَ فِى ٱلْءَاخِرَةِ مِنَ ٱلْخَٰسِرِينَ﴾.

And whoever denies the faith- his work has become worthless, and he will be among the losers in the hereafter. (al-Mā'idah: 5).

﴿وَمَنْ أَرَادَ ٱلْءَاخِرَةَ وَسَعَىٰ لَهَا سَعْيَهَا وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَأُو۟لَٰٓئِكَ كَانَ سَعْيُهُم مَّشْكُورًا﴾.

But whoever desires the [reward of the] hereafter and strives for it with necessary effort, while being a believer; for such their effort finds favour [with Allāh]. (al-Isrā': 19).

6- Sound belief in Allāh brings about compliance with the truth, both in theory and practice. It also prepares the believer to accept useful admonitions and effective lessons. In addition, faultless disposition, good intention, initiatives for the performance of good deeds, shunning forbidden and abominable actions, as well as sticking to commendable behaviour, noble habits and useful morals are also benefits of having sound Faith.

7- Believers find in their faith a safe haven from what befalls them of evil and sorrow, safety and danger, obedience and insurgence, or any other form of the inevitable. In the days of happiness and contentment they resort to their belief in Allāh, praising and extolling Him, while they also utilize the blessing He has bestowed on them in a manner that pleases Him. During hard times and in the case of any misfortune, they also have recourse to their faith, and console

themselves with it and the reward that usually comes in the aftermath. They also return to their faith whenever in fear or sorrow, and their hearts are thus reposed, their faith increases, and their reliance on Allāh becomes greater.

Equally, their belief in Allāh serves as a retreat for them even as they do pious acts and are being guided by Allāh to such. They, therefore, acknowledge His favour on them, aspire to complete the acts, and beseech Allāh to grant them steadiness and persistence in performing the same and make them acceptable to Him. They equally resort to their faith in Allāh when they commit any sin, and quickly repent and get themselves purified of whatever evil or taint involved. Thus, we see that true believers resort to their belief in the one and only God (Allāh) in all their actions and conditions.

8- Knowing Allāh through His Names and Attributes culminates in developing hearty love for Him. The reason is that Allāh's Names and Attributes are absolutely perfect, while perfection and excellence are naturally beloved to the human mind. When the heart is full of love for Allāh (ﷻ), the limbs will be readily prepared to embark on pious acts, and the wisdom behind the creation- which is to worship Allāh alone, thus becomes a reality.

9- Understanding the Names and Attributes of Allāh paves the way for a strong belief in Him as the only God who controls the affairs of the creation. This will also result in sincere reliance on Him in the course of striving for worldly or religious benefits. And in that lie

man's success and prosperity, for whoever puts his trust in Allāh, He will be sufficient for Him.

10- The *Iḥṣā'*[1] of Allāh's Names and the knowledge thereof are the gateway to all other aspects of knowledge. Usually, the field of any knowledge is either a creation of Allāh and His commandment, or something He has made or prescribed. Allāh's commandment and creation stem from His most beautiful Names, and are so co-related that one is a requisite for the other. Whoever accomplished the *iḥṣā'* of Allāh's Names in the best humanly possible way, has, therefore, mastered all branches of knowledge.

1- The word *iḥṣā'* literally means counting and memorization of something. But whenever used in relation to Allah's Names, it further involves believing in those Names or Attributes, and acting in line with their connotations. (Translator)

SECTION TWO: OTHER ARTICLES OF FAITH

Chapter 1: The Belief in Angels

1.1 The identity, origin, qualities and some of the characteristics of the angels.

1.2 The importance of believing in the angels, the nature of this belief and its proofs.

1.3 Functions of the angels.

1.1 The identity, origin, qualities and some of the characteristics of the angels

The word *'malāikah'* (i.e. angels) in the Arabic language is the plural form of *'malak'*; a derivative of the word *'alūk'* meaning 'message'.

Angels are Allāh's creatures who have luminous and soft bodies, and are capable of assuming many honourable shapes. They also possess outstanding power and exceptional ability to move from one place to another. There are many angels in existence, but there exact number is known only to Allāh, Who has chosen them to worship Him and keep to His commandments. Hence, the angels never refuse to execute any order from Him, and they do precisely whatever they are commanded to do.

The origin of the angels' creation

Allāh created the angels from light. A narration by 'Āisha (رضي الله عنها) quoted the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) as saying,

(خلقت الملائكة من نور. وخلق الجان من مارج من نار، وخلق آدم مما وصف لكم).

"The angels were created from light; the *jinn* from fierce flame of fire; and Ādam from that which has been described for you[1]". (*Muslim*: 2996).

Their qualities

There are texts in both the Qur'ān and the *Sunnah* describing attributes of the angels as well as the essence of those attributes.

1- i.e. in the Qur'ān. Cf. al-Sajdah: 7; Ṣād: 71. (Translator)

In some places, the angels are described as being powerful and stern. Allāh says,

﴿يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا۟ قُوٓا۟ أَنفُسَكُمْ وَأَهْلِيكُمْ نَارًا وَقُودُهَا ٱلنَّاسُ وَٱلْحِجَارَةُ عَلَيْهَا مَلَٰٓئِكَةٌ غِلَاظٌ شِدَادٌ﴾.

O you who believe! Save yourselves and your families from a fire whose fuel is people and stones. Over which are [appointed] angels, who are harsh and severe. (al-Taḥrīm: 6).

Allāh described Jibrīl (عليه السلام) (Archangel Gabriel) in some other verses as follows:

﴿عَلَّمَهُۥ شَدِيدُ ٱلْقُوَىٰ﴾.

He [the Prophet] has been taught [this Qur'ān] by one who is intense in strength. (al-Najm: 5).

﴿ذِى قُوَّةٍ عِندَ ذِى ٱلْعَرْشِ مَكِينٍ﴾.

Possessed of power and, with [Allāh] the Owner of the Throne, highly ranked. (al-Takwīr: 20).

The magnitude of the angels' physical sizes and creation is another quality, which has been used to describe them. According to Muslim, who in turn narrated this on the authority of 'Āisha (رضي الله عنها), that she asked Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) concerning the meaning of the following Qur'ānic verse:

﴿وَلَقَدْ رَءَاهُ بِٱلْأُفُقِ ٱلْمُبِينِ﴾.

And he [Muḥammad] has already seen him [Jibrīl] in the clear horizon. (al-Takwīr: 23). The Prophet (ﷺ) replied,

(إنما هو جبريل لم أره على صورته التي خلق عليها غير هاتين المرتين رأيته منهبطاً من السماء ساداً عظِمُ خلقه ما بين السماء إلى الأرض).

"That was Jibrīl (Gabriel) who I have not seen in his natural angelic form except on these two occasions. I saw him descending from the heavens with the magnitude of his physical appearance covering the distance between the heavens and the earth". (*Muslim*: 177).

In another narration by Imam Aḥmad, Ibn Mas'ūd (ﷺ) said,

(رأى رسول الله ﷺ جبريل في صورته، وله ستمائة جناح، كل جناح منها قد سدّ الأفق يسقط من جناحه من التهاويل والدر والياقوت ما الله به عليم).

"Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) saw Angel Jibrīl in his original angelic form. He has six hundred wings, each of which blocked up the horizon. Many pearls, rubies and other objects of different colours, the exact number of which is known to Allāh, were falling off the wings". (*Musnad Aḥmad* vol.i, p. 395 and vi, p. 294[1]).

Also, according to Jābir bin 'Abdullah (رضي الله عنهما), and as reported by Abu Dawūd, Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said,

(أُذن لي أن أحدث عن ملك من ملائكة الله من حملة العرش إنّ ما بين شحمة أذنه وعاتقه مسيرة سبعمائة عام).

"I have been authorised to speak of an angel of Allāh among the bearers of His Throne; the distance between his earlobe and his shoulder is equivalent to a seven hundred year walk". (*Sunan Abu Dawūd* vol. v p. 96 *ḥadīth* no 4727[2]).

1- The *Isnād* (chain of transmission) for this *ḥadīth* is 'good', said al-Ḥāfiz Ibn Kathīr.

2- According to Haithami in his *Majma' al-Zawāid,* the narrators are known for having transmitted many other sound *ḥadīths*.

Another feature of the angels is the difference in degrees of their physical composition. There are angels with just two wings, others with three, or four, while there are some with up to six hundred wings. Allāh (ﷻ) says in the Glorious Qur'ān,

﴿ٱلْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ فَاطِرِ ٱلسَّمَٰوَٰتِ وَٱلْأَرْضِ جَاعِلِ ٱلْمَلَٰٓئِكَةِ رُسُلًا أُو۟لِىٓ أَجْنِحَةٍ مَّثْنَىٰ وَثُلَٰثَ وَرُبَٰعَ يَزِيدُ فِى ٱلْخَلْقِ مَا يَشَآءُ﴾.

"Praise be to Allāh the Originator of the heavens and the earth, who made the angels messengers with wings; two or three or four. He increases in creation what He will". (Fāṭir: 1).

Attractiveness and handsomeness are also distinctive features of the angels, whose standadrd in this respect is of towering height. Allāh (ﷻ) described Angel Jibrīl saying,

﴿عَلَّمَهُۥ شَدِيدُ ٱلْقُوَىٰ ۝٥ ذُو مِرَّةٍ فَٱسْتَوَىٰ﴾.

"He [the Prophet] has been taught [this Qur'ān] by one who is intense in strength. Free from any defect in body and in mind. He [Jibrīl] rose and became stable [in his true angelic form]". (al-Najm: 5, 6).

The original word in the above verse "ذو مـرة" has been explained as 'one with attractive outward appearance' and as 'one with handsome tall shape' by Ibn 'Abbās and Qatādah respectively.

The Qur'ānic account concerning the reaction of the historical Egyptian women at the sight of Prophet Yūsuf (ﷺ) reads as follows:

﴿فَلَمَّا رَأَيْنَهُۥٓ أَكْبَرْنَهُۥ وَقَطَّعْنَ أَيْدِيَهُنَّ وَقُلْنَ حَٰشَ لِلَّهِ مَا هَٰذَا بَشَرًا إِنْ هَٰذَآ إِلَّا مَلَكٌ كَرِيمٌ﴾.

And when they saw him they exalted him [admired his attractiveness], cut their hands [distractedly] and said, 'God

forbid! This is not a human being; this is but a noble angel'! (Yūsuf: 31).

Had it not been an incontrovertible fact from the human perspective that angels are usually described with dazzling attractiveness, those women would not have made such a remark.

Furthermore, Allāh described the angels as being honourable and righteous. He says,

﴿بِأَيْدِي سَفَرَةٍ ۝١٥ كِرَامٍ بَرَرَةٍ﴾.

In the hands of scribes [i.e. angels]; honourable, righteous. ('Abasa: 15, 16).

﴿وَإِنَّ عَلَيْكُمْ لَحَٰفِظِينَ ۝١٠ كِرَامًا كَٰتِبِينَ﴾.

But indeed, over you are [angels appointed as] keepers. Honourable, writing down [your deeds]. (al-Infiṭār: 10, 11).

Modesty is another quality of the angels. The Prophet (ﷺ) has said of his companion, 'Uthmān (رضي الله عنه),

(ألا أستحي من رجل تستحي منه الملائكة).

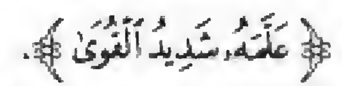
"Wouldn't I be bashful in the presence of a man, before whom the angels are bashful"? (*Muslim*: 2401).

The angels are also described as being knowledgeable. Allāh once addressed them in the following way,

﴿إِنِّي أَعْلَمُ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ﴾.

Indeed, I know that which you do not know. (al-Baqarah: 30).

Thus, Allāh states that the angels also have knowledge in certain area, even as He ascribes to Himself knowledge of other things, of which the angels are ignorant. He has also said concerning Angel Jibrīl (عليه السلام),



One [i.e. Gabriel] who is intense in strength taught him [this Qur'ān]. (al-Najm: 5).

This verse means, according to Ṭabari, that 'Jibrīl' taught the Prophet (ﷺ) this Qur'ān. Angel Jibrīl has therefore been described as not only a scholar, but also as a teacher.

There are still many other great qualities and noble characters of the angels mentioned in the Qur'ān and the *Sunnah*, showing how important and highly esteemed they are. May the peace of Allāh be upon them.

The characteristics of the angels

Allāh (ﷻ) has endowed the angels with certain features and qualities, which neither human beings nor *jinn* or any other creatures share with them.

One of those distinctive features is that they live in the heavens, and only come to the earth occasionally to carry out Allāh's orders regarding His creatures and their affairs. Allāh says,

﴿ يُنَزِّلُ ٱلْمَلَٰٓئِكَةَ بِٱلرُّوحِ مِنْ أَمْرِهِۦ عَلَىٰ مَن يَشَآءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِۦٓ ﴾.

He sends down the angels with the *rūḥ* (revelation) of His command to whom He wills of His servants. (al-Naḥl: 2).

﴿ وَتَرَى ٱلْمَلَٰٓئِكَةَ حَآفِّينَ مِنْ حَوْلِ ٱلْعَرْشِ يُسَبِّحُونَ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّهِمْ ﴾.

And you will see the angels surrounding the Throne on all sides, glorifying the praise of their Lord. (al-Zumar: 75).

In accordance with a narration by Abū Hurairah (ﷺ), Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said,

(يتعاقبون فيكم ملائكة بالليل، وملائكة بالنهار، ويجتمعون في صلاة الصبح وصلاة العصر، ثم يعرج الذين باتوا فيكم فيسألهم الله وهو أعلم بهم كيف تركتم عبادي؟ فيقولون: تركناهم وهم يصلّون، وأتيناهم وهم يصلون).

A group of angels stay with you at night and another group stay by daytime. The two groups gather at the time of Dawn (*Fajr*) and Afternoon (*'Aṣr*) prayers. Those angels who have been with you overnight ascend [to Heaven] where Allāh, even though He knows more about them, will ask the angels, 'In what state have you left my servants'? They reply, 'We left them as they were performing *ṣalāh* (prayer), just as we had also met them praying'. (*Bukhāri*: 555; *Muslim*: 632). The proofs concerning this issue are too many to be mentioned here.

Angels should not be described as females; contrary claims by the unbelievers have been clearly refuted in the following verses:

﴿ وَجَعَلُوا الْمَلَائِكَةَ الَّذِينَ هُمْ عِبَادُ الرَّحْمَٰنِ إِنَاثًا ۚ أَشَهِدُوا خَلْقَهُمْ ۚ سَتُكْتَبُ شَهَادَتُهُمْ وَيُسْأَلُونَ ﴾.

And they make the angels, who themselves are servants of [Allāh] the Most Merciful, females. Did they witness their creation? Their testimony will be recorded and they will be called to account. (al-Zukhruf: 19).

﴿إِنَّ الَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْآخِرَةِ لَيُسَمُّونَ الْمَلَائِكَةَ تَسْمِيَةَ الْأُنْثَىٰ ﴾.

Indeed, those who do not believe in the hereafter name the angels with the names of females. (al-Najm: 27).

Another distinguishing quality of the angels is their absolute obedience to all of Allāh's commandments. In addition, the angels have no tendency for sinful acts, but, on the contrary, have natural propensity for compliance with Allāh's commands. He says,

﴿لَا يَعْصُونَ اللَّهَ مَا أَمَرَهُمْ وَيَفْعَلُونَ مَا يُؤْمَرُونَ ﴾.

They [the angels] resist not any command from Allāh, but do that which they are ordered. (al-Taḥrīm: 6).

﴿ لَا يَسْبِقُونَهُ بِالْقَوْلِ وَهُمْ بِأَمْرِهِ يَعْمَلُونَ ﴾.

They speak not until He has spoken, and by His Command they act. (al-Anbiyā': 27).

Also, the angels are never bored with, or weary of engaging in acts of worship. Allāh (ﷻ) says,

﴿ وَمَنْ عِندَهُۥ لَا يَسْتَكْبِرُونَ عَنْ عِبَادَتِهِۦ وَلَا يَسْتَحْسِرُونَ ﴿١٩﴾ يُسَبِّحُونَ ٱلَّيْلَ وَٱلنَّهَارَ لَا يَفْتُرُونَ ﴾.

And those who are near Him [Allāh][1] are neither too proud to worship Him, nor are they weary [of His worship]. They glorify [Him] day and night, [and] they flag not. (al-Anbiyā': 19,20).

﴿ فَإِنِ ٱسْتَكْبَرُوا۟ فَٱلَّذِينَ عِندَ رَبِّكَ يُسَبِّحُونَ لَهُۥ بِٱلَّيْلِ وَٱلنَّهَارِ وَهُمْ لَا يَسْـَٔمُونَ ۩ ﴾.

But if they [the polytheists] are arrogant, still, those who are near your Lord glorify Him by night and by day, and they do not become weary. (Fuṣṣilat: 38).

Those are some of the qualities Allāh has given His angels, but not to humankind and *jinn*. Generally, the angels are entirely another creation, different from both humankind and *jinn* in their origin and physical composition. Humankind and *jinn* are similarly endowed with certain features, which also make them different from one another. Allāh knows best.

1- i.e. the angels. (Translator)

1.2 The importance of believing in the angels, the nature of this belief and its proofs

a) The importance of believing in the angels

The belief in angels constitutes in Islam a pillar of Faith and a major prerequisite for it. This has been clearly stated in the Qur'ān as well as in the *Sunnah* Allāh says,

﴿ ءَامَنَ ٱلرَّسُولُ بِمَآ أُنزِلَ إِلَيْهِ مِن رَّبِّهِۦ وَٱلْمُؤْمِنُونَ ۚ كُلٌّ ءَامَنَ بِٱللَّهِ وَمَلَٰٓئِكَتِهِۦ وَكُتُبِهِۦ وَرُسُلِهِۦ ﴾.

The Messenger has believed in what was revealed to him from his Lord, and [so have] the believers. Each of them has believed in Allāh, His angels, His Books and His Messengers... (al-Baqarah: 285).

This is a declaration by Allāh (ﷻ) that the belief in angels, as well as other articles of Faith, is part and parcel of His revelation to the Messenger (ﷺ). That He has also enjoined this on him and on his followers, and that they have all adhered to it.

Allāh says also in another verse,

﴿ لَّيْسَ ٱلْبِرَّ أَن تُوَلُّوا۟ وُجُوهَكُمْ قِبَلَ ٱلْمَشْرِقِ وَٱلْمَغْرِبِ وَلَٰكِنَّ ٱلْبِرَّ مَنْ ءَامَنَ بِٱللَّهِ وَٱلْيَوْمِ ٱلْءَاخِرِ وَٱلْمَلَٰٓئِكَةِ وَٱلْكِتَٰبِ وَٱلنَّبِيِّـۧنَ ﴾.

Righteousness is not that you [merely] turn your faces toward the east or the west, but righteousness is [in] one who believes in Allāh, the Last Day, the angels, the Book and the Prophets... (al-Baqarah: 177).

According to this verse, Allāh has made one's believe in the mentioned items a mark of righteousness, which comprises of all meritorious acts. The reason being that those items are the basis of all

pious acts, in addition to being the pillars of Faith, from which all other branches emanate.

On the other hand, Allāh informed us that disbelieving in those pillars of Faith is equivalent to disbelieving even in Him. He says,

﴿وَمَن يَكْفُرْ بِٱللَّهِ وَمَلَٰٓئِكَتِهِۦ وَكُتُبِهِۦ وَرُسُلِهِۦ وَٱلْيَوْمِ ٱلْءَاخِرِ فَقَدْ ضَلَّ ضَلَٰلًۢا بَعِيدًا﴾.

And whoever disbelieves in Allāh, His angels, His Books, His Messengers and the Last Day has truly gone far astray. (al-Nisā': 136).

Allāh has thus designated whoever denies the pillars of Faith as an unbeliever and described him as having wandered far astray. It is therefore bespoken that believing in the angels constitutes a major pillar of Faith, while neglecting it nullifies the creed of a Muslim entirely.

The *Sunnah* as well contains some proofs on this point, as clearly stated in the *ḥadīth* known as the *ḥadīth* of Jibrīl. The *ḥadīth*, as related by Muslim, quotes 'Umar bin al-Khaṭṭāb (ﷺ) as saying,

(بينما نحن عند رسول الله ﷺ ذات يوم إذ طلع علينا رجل شديد بياض الثياب، شديد سواد الشعر، لا يرى عليه أثر السفر، ولا يعرفه منا أحد، حتى جلس إلى النبي ﷺ، فأسند ركبتيه إلى ركبتيه، ووضع كفيه على فخذيه، وقال: يا محمد! أخبرني عن الإسلام؟ فقال رسول الله ﷺ: الإسلام أن تشهد أن لا إله إلا الله وأن محمداً رسول الله ﷺ، وتقيم الصلاة، وتؤتي الزكاة وتصوم رمضان، وتحج البيت إن استطعت إليه سبيلا. قال: صدقت. قال: فعجبنا له، يسأله ويصدقه. قال: فأخبرني عن الإيمان؟ قال: أن تؤمن بالله، وملائكته، وكتبه، ورسله، واليوم الآخر. وتؤمن بالقدر خيره وشره. قال: صدقت. قال: فأخبرني عن الإحسان. قال: أن تعبد الله كأنك تراه، فإن لم تكن تراه فإنه يراك. قال: فأخبرني عن الساعة؟ قال ما المسؤول عنها بأعلم من السائل. قال: فأخبرني عن أماراتها؟ قال: أن تلد الأمة ربّتها. وأن ترى الحفاة العُراة، العَالة، رِعاءَ الشاء، يتطاولون في البنيان. قال: ثم

انطلق فلبثت ملياً ثم قال لي: يا عمر! أتدري من السائل؟ قلت: الله ورسوله أعلم. قال: فإنه جبريل، أتاكم يعلمكم دينكم)

One day, we were with Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) when a purely white dressed man, with exceptionally black hair appeared before us. No signs of travel could be seen on him, and yet none of us knew him. He eventually sat with the Prophet (ﷺ) and placed his knees close to his knees, while resting his palms over his own thighs. He then said, **'O Muḥammad! Inform me about Islam'.** Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said, **'Islam is to testify that there is no deity worthy of worship but Allāh, and that Muḥammad is His Messenger; to perform *Ṣalāh*; to pay the obligatory charity (*Zakāh*); to fast in the month of Ramaḍān and to perform *Ḥajj* to the sacred House [in Makkah], provided that you are able to do so'.** He [the questioner] remarked, **'You have spoken the truth'.** We were amazed to see him playing the roles of a questioner and a verifier simultaneously. He then said, **'Tell me about Faith'.** Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said, **'That you believe in Allāh, His angels, His Books, His Messengers, the Last Day and in predestination; whether auspicious or inauspicious'.** He remarked again saying, **'You have told the truth',** and said further, **'Inform me about *al-Iḥsān*[1]'.** The Prophet (ﷺ) said, **'To worship Allāh as if you are seeing Him, for although you do not, but He certainly sees you'.** The questioner said, **'Tell me about the Hour[2]',** and the Prophet's response was, **'Who is being asked this question**

1- That is outstanding performance of acts of worship. (Translator)

2- i.e. the last day of the world. (Translator)

does not know more than the questioner himself'. Then he said, **'Tell me then about its signs'.** The Prophet (ﷺ) said, **'That a slave-girl will give birth to her mistress, and that you will see barefooted, unclothed, destitute shepherds vying with one another in constructing magnificent houses'.** The questioner left at this stage, and after a long while the Prophet (ﷺ) asked me, **'O 'Umar! Did you know who the questioner was'?** I replied, 'Allāh and His Messenger know best'. The Prophet (ﷺ) said, **"That was [Angel] Jibrīl; he has come to teach you your religion".** (*Muslim*: 8).

This is an important *ḥadīth,* which embodies all principles and degrees of religion, and symbolizes a unique approach to the teaching of Islam as a religion. It applies a methodology based on dialogue between an angelic Messenger, Jibrīl (ﷺ), the archangel, and a human Messenger, Muḥammad (ﷺ), who is also the best of all mankind.

It is therefore advisable that Muslims should attach importance to this *ḥadīth* and borrow from it their approach to the process of teaching and learning. The pious predecessors -may Allāh be pleased with them- have also acted in the same way. More pertinently, the *ḥadīth* contains reference to the angels, and describes the belief in them as a pillar of Faith. Allāh knows best.

How do we believe in the angels?

Believing in the angels comprises of certain things, which every believer in them must observe. They are as follows:

1- Believing in them and in their existence. The aforementioned texts have established this, just as they have also pointed to its being a pillar of Faith; hence, the faith would be invalid without it.

2- We should also believe in the multiplicity of their number, so that none but Allāh alone could tell their exact figure. The proof of this includes Almighty Allāh's saying that,

﴿وَمَا يَعْلَمُ جُنُودَ رَبِّكَ إِلَّا هُوَ﴾.

And none knows the soldiers of your Lord save He [Himself]. (al-Muddaththir: 31). That is to say, in the opinion of some pious predecessors of the Muslim Ummah, due to the large number of the soldiers of your Lord, (i.e. the angels) none except Him alone knows them.

The lengthy *ḥadīth* of the Night Journey of the Prophet to heaven narrated by Mālik bin Ṣa'ṣa'ah, (ﷺ) quotes Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) as saying ,

(... ثم رفع لي البيت المعمور، فقلت: يا جبريل! ما هذا؟ قال: هذا البيت المعمور، يدخله كل يوم سبعون ألف ملك، إذا خرجوا منه لم يعودوا فيه آخر ما عليهم).

"Then I was shown al-*Bait al-Ma'mūr* [i.e. the Frequented House in heaven], and I asked Jibrīl what it was. He replied, 'This is the *Bait Ma'mūr*; seventy thousand angels enter it every day, and when they have left, they never return to it[1]'." (*Bukhārī*: 3207; *Muslim*: 164[2]).

1- That means a fresh batch of angels enters it every day. (Translator)

2- The wording as quoted above is from the Muslim's compilation.

In another *ḥadīth* related by Muslim on the authority of 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd (ﷺ), Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said,

(يؤتى بجهنم يومئذ لها سبعون ألف زمام، مع كل زمام سبعون ألف ملك يجرونها).

Hellfire will be brought on that day with seventy thousand bridles, and with each bridle there will be seventy thousand angels dragging the hell. (*Muslim*: 2842).

The two *ḥadīths* we have just mentioned are proofs on how large the number of the angels is. We have stated that a batch of seventy thousand angels enters the *Bait Ma'mūr* every day and never returns to it again, and that Hellfire will be dragged on the Day of Resurrection by such a great number of angels. Therefore, one can just imagine the multitude of other angels, charged with other various tasks! Only Allāh, their Creator, knows that.

3- The dignity of the angels, their high standing and nobility in the sight of their Lord should also be accorded necessary recognition. Allāh (ﷻ) says,

﴿ وَقَالُوا اتَّخَذَ الرَّحْمَٰنُ وَلَدًا ۗ سُبْحَانَهُ ۚ بَلْ عِبَادٌ مُّكْرَمُونَ ﴿٢٦﴾ لَا يَسْبِقُونَهُ بِالْقَوْلِ وَهُم بِأَمْرِهِ يَعْمَلُونَ ﴾.

And they say, 'The Most Merciful [Allāh] has taken unto Himself a son'. Glorified is He! Rather, they are [but] honoured servants [of His]. They do not utter a word until He has spoken, and on His order they act. (al-Anbiyā': 26 ,27).

﴿ بِأَيْدِي سَفَرَةٍ ﴿١٥﴾ كِرَامٍ بَرَرَةٍ ﴾.

In the hands of scribes [angels]. Honourable, righteous. ('Abasa: 15, 16).

Here Allāh described them as being honoured by Him, and in another verse He says of them,

﴿فَالَّذِينَ عِندَ رَبِّكَ يُسَبِّحُونَ لَهُۥ بِالَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ وَهُمْ لَا يَسْـَٔمُونَ ۩﴾.

Those who are near your Lord glorify Him by night and by day, and never do they become weary. (Fuṣṣilat: 38).

Thus, He has qualified them as those who are near Him – an outstanding prestige indeed, in addition to being un-weary in worshipping Him.

Furthermore, in keeping with the angels' prestige in His sight, Allāh has sworn by them in some places in the Qur'ān. These include:

﴿وَالصَّـٰٓفَّـٰتِ صَفًّا ۝١ فَالزَّٰجِرَٰتِ زَجْرًا ۝٢ فَالتَّـٰلِيَـٰتِ ذِكْرًا﴾.

[I swear] by those [angels] ranged in ranks[1]. And those who drive [the clouds] along. And those who recite the *Dhikr* [Qur'ān and other divine Books]. (al-Ṣṣāffāt: 1-3).

﴿فَالْفَـٰرِقَـٰتِ فَرْقًا ۝٤ فَالْمُلْقِيَـٰتِ ذِكْرًا﴾.

And by those [angels] who bring criterion. And those who deliver messages [to Allāh's human Messengers]. (al-Mursalāt: 4 , 5).

Proofs of the honour Allāh has bestowed upon His angels are expressed in varying methods and multifarious contexts in the Glorious Qur'ān. These are so enormous and clear enough for any right minded person to observe. Establishing the same, from an Islamic viewpoint, is therefore inevitable.

1- Or lined up in rows.

4- One should also believe that the angels have a hierarchy in terms of their positions in the sight of Allāh (ﷻ), as established in the religious texts. Allāh says,

﴿ ٱللَّهُ يَصْطَفِى مِنَ ٱلْمَلَٰٓئِكَةِ رُسُلًا وَمِنَ ٱلنَّاسِ ۚ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ سَمِيعٌۢ بَصِيرٌ ﴾.

Allāh chooses from the angels Messengers and from mankind. Allāh is indeed, All-Hearing, All-Seeing. (al-Ḥajj: 75).

﴿ لَّن يَسْتَنكِفَ ٱلْمَسِيحُ أَن يَكُونَ عَبْدًا لِّلَّهِ وَلَا ٱلْمَلَٰٓئِكَةُ ٱلْمُقَرَّبُونَ ﴾.

Never would the Messiah disdain to be a servant of Allāh, nor would the angels who are near [to Him]. (al-Nisā': 172).

Here, we are told that some of the angels have been chosen to deliver Allāh's Message, while others are near Him; an indication of their superiority. Those who are near Allāh (*Al-Muqarrabūn*), in addition to the bearers of His Throne are the best of all angels, with just three among them occupying the highest positions. The trio are mentioned in a supplication, which the Prophet used to recite at the beginning of the night supererogatory *ṣalāh* (prayer). He used to say,

(اللهم رب جبريل وميكائيل وإسرافيل فاطر السموات والأرض عالم الغيب والشهادة...).

O Allāh! The Lord of Jibrīl, Mīkāīl and Isrāfīl. The Originator of the heavens and the earth, Who knows the seen and unseen. (*Musnad Aḥmad*: vol. vi p. 156; *Sunan al-Nasāī* vol. iii p. 173 *ḥadīth* no. 1625[1]).

Among these three, Jibrīl is superior to the other two angels. He is the one entrusted to convey Allāh's revelation; his honour is

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1- An almost identical narration occurs as well in both *ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* (no. 770) and *Sunan Ibn Mājah* (no. 1357).

therefore an upshot of his task. Allāh made mention of Jibrīl in the Qur'ān in a manner incomparable to the way any other angel has been mentioned. He has also called and described him with most honourable names and qualities, such as calling him the *Rūḥ*[1] in the following verses:

﴿ نَزَلَ بِهِ ٱلرُّوحُ ٱلْأَمِينُ ﴾.

The Trustworthy *Rūḥ* has brought it [i.e. the Qur'ān]. (al-Shu'arā': 193).

﴿ تَنَزَّلُ ٱلْمَلَٰٓئِكَةُ وَٱلرُّوحُ فِيهَا ﴾.

Therein [on the Night of Decree[2]] descend the angels and the *Rūḥ*. (al-Qadr: 4).

Furthermore, this epithet "*rūḥ*" is mentioned annexed to the Almighty Allāh's name, as another honour for its bearer, Jibrīl. Allāh says,

﴿فَأَرْسَلْنَآ إِلَيْهَا رُوحَنَا فَتَمَثَّلَ لَهَا بَشَرًا سَوِيًّا ﴾.

Then We sent to her our *Rūḥ* who appeared before her in the form of a well proportioned man. (Maryam: 17).

﴿ قُلْ نَزَّلَهُۥ رُوحُ ٱلْقُدُسِ مِن رَّبِّكَ ﴾.

Say, 'The *Rūḥ* of the *Quds* brought it down from your Lord'. (al-Naḥl: 102). The word '*Quds*' here, according to the correct interpretation of the verse, refers to Allāh (ﷻ).

Jibrīl is further described in some other ways, including:

1- Literally, "spirit".

2- i.e. *Laylat al-Qadr* in the last ten nights of Ramaḍān. (Translator)

﴿إِنَّهُۥ لَقَوۡلُ رَسُولٖ كَرِيمٖ ١٩ ذِي قُوَّةٍ عِندَ ذِي ٱلۡعَرۡشِ مَكِينٖ ٢٠ مُّطَاعٖ ثَمَّ أَمِينٖ﴾.

Indeed, it is a word of [i.e. delivered by] an honoured Messenger, Possessed of power and, with [Allāh] the Owner of the Throne, highly ranked. Obeyed there [in the heavens] and trustworthy. (al-Takwīr: 19-21).

﴿عَلَّمَهُۥ شَدِيدُ ٱلۡقُوَىٰ ٥ ذُو مِرَّةٖ فَٱسۡتَوَىٰ﴾.

He [the Prophet] has been taught [this Qur'ān] by one who is intense in strength. Free from any defect in body and in mind. He [Jibrīl] rose and became stable [in his true angelic form]. (al-Najm: 5, 6).

Thus, Allāh described Jibrīl as His Messenger, and as being honourable, mighty and distinguished in His sight. Jibrīl was also described as being obeyed in the heavens, trustworthy in the conveyance of revelation, in addition to being of handsome physical appearance.

5- We must love the angels with all patronage and advocacy, and should not perceive them as enemies. Allāh (ﷻ) says,

﴿وَٱلۡمُؤۡمِنُونَ وَٱلۡمُؤۡمِنَٰتُ بَعۡضُهُمۡ أَوۡلِيَآءُ بَعۡضٖۚ﴾.

The believers, males and females, are friends (supporters) of one another. (al-Tawbah: 71).

The fact that the angels are also believers in Allāh and obedient to Him, leaves no doubt concerning their inclusion here. The words of Allāh referring to the angels as being submissive to His orders read as follows:

﴿لَّا يَعْصُونَ ٱللَّهَ مَآ أَمَرَهُمْ وَيَفْعَلُونَ مَا يُؤْمَرُونَ﴾.

They [the angels] resist not any command from Allāh, but do that which they are ordered. (al-Taḥrīm: 6).

Allāh has also informed us that the angels, on their part, similarly love and support the Messenger and his followers, the believers. He said,

﴿وَإِن تَظَٰهَرَا عَلَيْهِ فَإِنَّ ٱللَّهَ هُوَ مَوْلَىٰهُ وَجِبْرِيلُ وَصَٰلِحُ ٱلْمُؤْمِنِينَ﴾.

But if you help one another against him [the Prophet], then indeed, Allāh is his Protector, and Jibrīl and the righteous among the believers. (al-Taḥrīm: 4).

﴿هُوَ ٱلَّذِى يُصَلِّى عَلَيْكُمْ وَمَلَٰٓئِكَتُهُۥ لِيُخْرِجَكُم مِّنَ ٱلظُّلُمَٰتِ إِلَى ٱلنُّورِ﴾.

He [Allāh] it is Who sends His blessings on you, and so do His angels. That He may bring you forth from darkness unto light. (al-Aḥzāb: 43).

﴿إِنَّ ٱلَّذِينَ قَالُوا۟ رَبُّنَا ٱللَّهُ ثُمَّ ٱسْتَقَٰمُوا۟ تَتَنَزَّلُ عَلَيْهِمُ ٱلْمَلَٰٓئِكَةُ أَلَّا تَخَافُوا۟ وَلَا تَحْزَنُوا۟﴾.

Indeed, those who have said, 'Our Lord is Allāh' and afterward were upright, the angels will descend upon them [saying,] 'Fear not nor grieve'. (Fuṣṣilat: 30).

Believers are therefore duty-bound to love and support the angels, as reciprocation of their love, help, support and asking Allāh to forgive the believers as well. Similarly, Allāh warned against being hostile to His angels. He says,

﴿مَن كَانَ عَدُوًّا لِّلَّهِ وَمَلَٰٓئِكَتِهِۦ وَرُسُلِهِۦ وَجِبْرِيلَ وَمِيكَىٰلَ فَإِنَّ ٱللَّهَ عَدُوٌّ لِّلْكَٰفِرِينَ﴾.

Whoever is an enemy to Allāh, His angels, His Messengers, Jibrīl and Mīkāīl – then indeed, Allāh is an enemy to the unbelievers. (al-Baqarah: 98).

Here, Allāh declared that harbouring hatred for His angels also provokes His own enmity and wrath. The angels only act according to Allāh's instruction; being hostile to them is, therefore, tantamount to being hostile to Allāh Himself.

6- Believing that angels are mere creatures of Allāh, and have no say, neither in the creation of the universe nor in the running of its affairs. They are but forces of Almighty Allāh, who act on His orders. The disposition of all affairs is totally in the Hands of Allāh; no-one shares any portion thereof with Him.

Moreover, it is unlawful to devote any act of worship to the angels. Rather, their Creator, who has also created all other creatures and has neither a partner nor a peer in His Lordship, Divinity, Names and Attributes, should alone be worshipped. Allāh says in explaining this point,

﴿ وَلَا يَأْمُرَكُمْ أَن تَتَّخِذُوا الْمَلَائِكَةَ وَالنَّبِيِّينَ أَرْبَابًا ۗ أَيَأْمُرُكُم بِالْكُفْرِ بَعْدَ إِذْ أَنتُم مُّسْلِمُونَ ﴾.

Neither could he [a Prophet of Allāh] command you to take the angels and Prophets as lords. Would he order you to disbelieve after you had been Muslims? (Āl-'Imrān: 80).

﴿ وَقَالُوا اتَّخَذَ الرَّحْمَٰنُ وَلَدًا ۗ سُبْحَانَهُ ۚ بَلْ عِبَادٌ مُّكْرَمُونَ ﴿٢٦﴾ لَا يَسْبِقُونَهُ بِالْقَوْلِ وَهُم بِأَمْرِهِ يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٢٧﴾ يَعْلَمُ مَا بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَمَا خَلْفَهُمْ وَلَا يَشْفَعُونَ إِلَّا لِمَنِ ارْتَضَىٰ وَهُم مِّنْ خَشْيَتِهِ مُشْفِقُونَ ﴿٢٨﴾ ۞ وَمَن يَقُلْ مِنْهُمْ إِنِّي إِلَٰهٌ مِّن دُونِهِ فَذَٰلِكَ نَجْزِيهِ جَهَنَّمَ ۚ كَذَٰلِكَ نَجْزِي الظَّالِمِينَ ﴾.

And they say, 'The Most Merciful [Allāh] has taken unto Himself a son'. Glorified is He! Rather, they are [but] honoured servants [of His]. They do not utter a word until He has spoken, and on His order they act. He knows what is before them and what is behind

them, and they cannot intercede except for one whom He approves of. And they, from fear of Him, are apprehensive. And whoever of them should say, 'Indeed, I am a god besides Him', such We will recompense with hellfire. Thus do We recompense the wrongdoers. (al-Anbiyā': 26-29).

Here, Allāh made it known that He has never ordered the worship of the angels. And how could He have ordered that when such is an act of disblief in Him? Subsequently, Allāh disproved the claim that the angels are His daughters, and raised Himself far above such a false claim. He also declared that they are but servants whom He has chosen to honour. They abide by His order, apprehensive from fear of Him, and could not intervene on behalf of anyone except him among the monotheists with whom He is pleased. In conclusion, Allāh explained that hell is the punishment for any of the angels who dares to claim that he is a god. It is thus evident from the foregoing that the angels are mere servants of Allāh and under His absolute control. On Him alone they depend to derive any strength or power, whatsoever.

7- Believing specifically in those angels who are mentioned by name in either the Qur'ān or the *Sunnah*. They include Jibrīl, Mīkāīl, Isrāfīl, Mālik, Hārūt, Mārūt, Riḍwān, Munkar, Nakīr and any other angel who has been specifically mentioned in divine texts. This list also comprises those angels whose description is given in the texts, such as *Raqīb* and *'Atīd* (An observer who is prepared to record every deed), and those who are identified with certain functions, like the Death Angel and the Angel of the mountains. It includes also those whose collective tasks are spelled out generally, as in the cases of the

bearers of the Throne, the honourable scribes, the angels charged with the protection of Allāh's creation, those entrusted with the safety of embryos and the uteruses, those who perform circumambulation (*ṭawāf*) round *al-Bait al-Ma'mūr* in the heaven, as well as those who tour around the globe, etc. Our faith in this respect should be specific and strictly in accordance with what we find in the texts concerning their names, qualities, functions and information. We shall discuss all this in the coming pages *insha Allāh*.

The above represents the bulk of what we must believe in, regarding the angels, as contained in the Islamic texts. Allāh, the Exalted knows best.

1.3 Functions of the angels

Angels are a section of Almighty Allāh's soldiers. He has assigned to them many important roles and assignments, and equipped them with the necessary strength to enable them perform their duties effectively. Based on their diversified predispositions and responsibilities, the angels are divisible along the following lines:

Angel Jibrīl, who is responsible for the conveyance of Allāh's revelation to the human Messengers, May the peace and blessing be upon them. Allāh says,

﴿ نَزَلَ بِهِ ٱلرُّوحُ ٱلْأَمِينُ ﴿١٩٣﴾ عَلَىٰ قَلْبِكَ لِتَكُونَ مِنَ ٱلْمُنذِرِينَ ﴿١٩٤﴾ بِلِسَانٍ عَرَبِيٍّ مُّبِينٍ ﴾.

The trustworthy *Rūḥ*[1] has brought it [i.e. the Qur'ān]. Upon your heart [O Muḥammad], that you may be of the warners. In a clear Arabic tongue. (al-Shu'arā': 193-195).

Jibrīl, as we have mentioned earlier, is the archangel and the most honourable of all angels in the sight of Allāh, Who has accordingly described him as powerful and trustworthy in discharging his responsibilities.

The Prophet (ﷺ) only saw him in his angelic form twice, while on all other occasions he appeared to him in the form of a man. In one of those two angelic appearances, the Prophet (ﷺ) saw him in the horizon, towards the east. On this, Allāh (ﷻ) has said,

﴿ وَلَقَدْ رَءَاهُ بِٱلْأُفُقِ ٱلْمُبِينِ ﴾.

And indeed, he [Muḥammad] has seen him [Jibrīl] in the clear horizon. (al-Takwīr: 23).

1- Literally, 'spirit'.

The other time the Prophet (ﷺ) saw Jibrīl was in the heaven, on the night of *Isrā'*. Allāh says,

﴿ وَلَقَدْ رَءَاهُ نَزْلَةً أُخْرَىٰ (١٣) عِندَ سِدْرَةِ ٱلْمُنتَهَىٰ (١٤) عِندَهَا جَنَّةُ ٱلْمَأْوَىٰ ﴾.

And surely, he has seen him [Jibrīl] in another descent [on another occasion]. At the Lote-tree of the Utmost Boundary. Near it is the Paradise of Abode. (al-Najm: 13-15).

According to Muslim's compilation of the *ḥadīth*, 'Āishah (رضي الله عنها) asked the Prophet (ﷺ) to explain the above quoted verses, and he said,

(إنما هو جبريل لم أره على صورته التي خلق عليها غير هاتين المرتين رأيته منهبطاً من السماء ساداً عِظَمُ خلقه ما بين السماء إلى الأرض).

"That was Jibrīl, who I have not seen in his real angelic form except on these two occasions. I saw him descending from the heaven with the magnitude of his physical appearance covering the distance between the heavens and the earth". (*Muslim*: 177).

Another angel is Mīkāīl, who takes charge of raindrops, plantations and crops. He has been mentioned in the Qur'ān as follows,

﴿ مَن كَانَ عَدُوًّا لِّلَّهِ وَمَلَٰٓئِكَتِهِۦ وَرُسُلِهِۦ وَجِبْرِيلَ وَمِيكَىٰلَ فَإِنَّ ٱللَّهَ عَدُوٌّ لِّلْكَٰفِرِينَ ﴾.

Whoever is an enemy to Allāh, His angels, His Messengers, Jibrīl and Mīkāīl, then indeed, Allāh is an enemy to the unbelievers. (al-Baqarah: 98).

Angel Mīkāīl occupies a high position with his Lord. No wonder He made special mention of both him and Jibrīl in the above verse, even after he had earlier mentioned the more general

appellation -"His angels"- to show how important the two of them are. Mīkāīl is also mentioned in the *Sunnah*, as we have quoted earlier the Prophetic supplication for the night non-obligatory prayer, when he would say,

(اللهم رب جبريل وميكائيل وإسرافيل ...).

"O Allāh! The Lord of Jibrīl, Mīkāīl and Isrāfīl…". (*Musnad Aḥmad: vol. vi p.156; Sunan al-Nasāi vol. iii p.173 ḥadīth no.* 1625[1]). The Muslim scholars have deduced from this that the trio of Jibrīl, Mīkāīl and Isrāfīl are the best of all angels.

The last mentioned in the *ḥadīth*, **Isrāfīl, is charged with the responsibility of blowing the *Ṣūr*[2]**, in addition to being one of the bearers of Allāh's Throne. Imam Aḥmad reported on the authority of 'Abdullah bin 'Amr (رضي الله عنهما) that a Bedouin once came to the Prophet (ﷺ) and asked him what was the *Ṣūr*? The Prophet (ﷺ) answered,

(قرن يُنفخ فيه).

"A horn which will be blown". (*Musnad Aḥmad*: vol. ii p.162, 192). This *ḥadīth* was also related by Ḥākim[3], and both he and Dhahabi declared it an authentic narration.

According to both Aḥmad and Tirmidhi, Abu Sa'īd al-Khudri (ﷺ) also narrated a *ḥadīth* quoting the Prophet (ﷺ) as saying,

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1- An almost identical narration occurs as well in both *ṣaḥiḥ Muslim* (no. 770) and *Sunan Ibn Mājah* (no 1357).

2- This *Ṣūr* is in the form of a huge horn.

3- *Mustadrak* vol ii p. 506; iv p. 589. The *ḥadīth* has been quoted directly from this source.

(كيف أنعم وقد التقم صاحب القرنَ القرنَ وحنى جبهته وأصغى سمعه ينظر متى يؤمر، قال المسلمون: يا رسول الله فما تقول؟ قال: قولوا حسبنا الله ونعم الوكيل على الله توكلنا).

"How can I feel comfortable, when the holder of the Horn has devoured it! With his forehead bent, he listens attentively waiting to see when he will be ordered [to blow the Horn]. The Muslims [i.e. the audience] said, **'O Messenger of Allāh, what should we say then'? He replied, "say, '*Ḥasbuna Allāh wa ni'ma al-Wakīl, 'ala Allāh tawakkalnā*' (Allāh is sufficient for us, and He is the best Disposer of affairs. We put our trust in Allāh)'."** (*Musnad Aḥmad*: vol. iii p.vii; *Sunan Tirmidhi* vol iv p. 620 no. 2431; vol. v pp. 372-373 no. 3243).

This is a fairly sound *ḥadīth* (*ḥasan*), in the opinion of Tirmidhi, but authentic (*ṣaḥīḥ*) according to some other scholars.

Angel Isrāfīl will blow the Horn three times; the blast of panic, followed by that of swoon, and finally the blast of resurrection. Allāh says as He refers to the first blow,

﴿ وَيَوْمَ يُنفَخُ فِي ٱلصُّورِ فَفَزِعَ مَن فِي ٱلسَّمَٰوَٰتِ وَمَن فِي ٱلْأَرْضِ إِلَّا مَن شَآءَ ٱللَّهُ ﴾.

And [remember] the day when the Horn will be blown, all who are in the heavens and all who are on the earth will start in fear, except whom Allāh will [exempt]. (al-Naml: 87).

The proof of the other two blows comes in the following verse:

﴿ وَنُفِخَ فِي ٱلصُّورِ فَصَعِقَ مَن فِي ٱلسَّمَٰوَٰتِ وَمَن فِي ٱلْأَرْضِ إِلَّا مَن شَآءَ ٱللَّهُ ثُمَّ نُفِخَ فِيهِ أُخْرَىٰ فَإِذَا هُمْ قِيَامٌ يَنظُرُونَ ﴾.

And the Horn will be blown. All who are in the heavens and all who are on the earth will swoon away, except whom Allāh will [exempt]. Then it will blown a second time, and, at once, they will be standing, looking on. (al-Zumar: 68).

There is another angel, whose primary function is life termination; hence, he is called The Angel of Death (*Malak al Mawt)* Allāh (ﷻ) says,

﴿ قُلْ يَتَوَفَّىٰكُم مَّلَكُ ٱلْمَوْتِ ٱلَّذِى وُكِّلَ بِكُمْ ثُمَّ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكُمْ تُرْجَعُونَ ﴾.

Say, 'The Angel of Death, who is set over you, will take your souls. Then to your Lord you will be returned'. (al-Sajdah: 11).

The angel of death has under him some angelical subordinates, who appear to a person at the point of death. The mode of this appearance varies from one person to another; they appear in a most pleasant mood to the righteous and in a most horrible way to the sinful. Allāh (ﷻ) says,

﴿ حَتَّىٰٓ إِذَا جَآءَ أَحَدَكُمُ ٱلْمَوْتُ تَوَفَّتْهُ رُسُلُنَا وَهُمْ لَا يُفَرِّطُونَ ﴾.

Until when death has approached one of you, Our Messengers [Angel of Death and his aides] take his soul, and they do not neglect their duty. (al-An'ām: 61).

The angel entrusted with the mountains is called 'The Angel of the Mountains' (*Malak al-Jibāl*). He is mentioned in a *ḥadīth* narrating the Prophet's bitter experience at the advent of his mission with the people of Ṭāif[1] who had then turned down the invitation to Islam. The Prophet (ﷺ) said,

(فإذا أنا بسحابة قد أظلتني، فنظرت فإذا فيها جبريل، فناداني فقال: إن الله قد سمع قول قومك لك وما ردوا عليك، وقد بعث الله إليك ملك الجبال لتأمره بما شئت فيهم، فناداني ملك الجبال. فسلم عليّ ثم قال: يا محمد. فقال: ذلك فيما شئت، إن شئت أن أطبق عليهم الأخشبين. فقال النبي ﷺ بل أرجو أن يخرج الله من أصلابهم من يعبد الله وحده لا يشرك به شيئاً).

1- A city near Makkah, at a distance of about 85 km. (Translator)

"Suddenly, I was shaded by a cloud. As I looked up I saw Angel Jibrīl in that cloud. He called me and said, 'Allāh has heard what your people said and their response to your call. Now He has sent to you the Angel of the Mountains, so that you may command him to deal with them in a manner you deem fit'. Then the Angel of the Mountains also called me, greeted me and then said, 'O Muḥammad, that is left to you; if you like, I will cause the two mountains [of Makkah; Abū Qubais and the one facing it] to fall on them'. The Prophet (ﷺ) said, 'No, I rather hope that Allāh will bring forth from among their offspring who would worship Him alone and would not associate partners with Him'." (*Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī*: 3231; *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*: 1795).

Another angel is entrusted with the safety of the uteruses. Anas bin Mālik (ﷺ) narrated that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said,

(إن الله عز وجل وكّل بالرَّحِم ملكاً يقول: يا ربِّ! نطفة. يا ربِّ! علقة. يا ربِّ مضغة. فإذا أراد أن يقضي خلقه، قال: أذكر أم أنثى؟ شقي أم سعيد؟ فما الرزق والأجل؟ فيكتب في بطن أمه).

"Allāh has appointed for the womb an angel who says, 'O Lord! A drop of semen, O Lord! A clot, O Lord! A little lump of flesh'. And if Allāh wishes to complete its creation, the angel will ask: 'Male or female? Wretched or blessed? What about his/her provisions, and how long will he/she live'? All that is written while the child is in the mother's womb". (*Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī*: 318; *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*: 2646).

The bearers of Allāh's Throne are also among the angels. Allāh (ﷻ) says,

﴿ ٱلَّذِينَ يَحۡمِلُونَ ٱلۡعَرۡشَ وَمَنۡ حَوۡلَهُۥ يُسَبِّحُونَ بِحَمۡدِ رَبِّهِمۡ وَيُؤۡمِنُونَ بِهِۦ وَيَسۡتَغۡفِرُونَ لِلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ ﴾.

Those who carry the Throne and those around it glorify the praises of their Lord, and believe in Him, and ask forgiveness for the believers. (Ghāfir: 7).

﴿ وَيَحۡمِلُ عَرۡشَ رَبِّكَ فَوۡقَهُمۡ يَوۡمَئِذٖ ثَمَٰنِيَةٞ ﴾.

And eight [of the angels] will, that day, bear the Throne of your Lord above them. (al-Ḥāqqah: 17).

According to a Muslim scholar, those angels around the Throne are known as the *Karrūbiyyūn*, who, together with the bearers of the Throne (*Ḥamalatu al 'Arsh*), are of the highest rank among the angels[1].

Another group of the angels are the keepers of Paradise. Allāh (ﷻ) says,

﴿ وَسِيقَ ٱلَّذِينَ ٱتَّقَوۡاْ رَبَّهُمۡ إِلَى ٱلۡجَنَّةِ زُمَرًاۖ حَتَّىٰٓ إِذَا جَآءُوهَا وَفُتِحَتۡ أَبۡوَٰبُهَا وَقَالَ لَهُمۡ خَزَنَتُهَا سَلَٰمٌ عَلَيۡكُمۡ طِبۡتُمۡ فَٱدۡخُلُوهَا خَٰلِدِينَ ﴾.

And those who feared their Lord will be led to Paradise in groups until when they reach there while it gates have been opened and its keepers say, 'Peace be upon you; you have done well; so enter it to abide therein eternally'. (al-Zumar: 73).

﴿ جَنَّٰتُ عَدۡنٖ يَدۡخُلُونَهَا وَمَن صَلَحَ مِنۡ ءَابَآئِهِمۡ وَأَزۡوَٰجِهِمۡ وَذُرِّيَّٰتِهِمۡۖ وَٱلۡمَلَٰٓئِكَةُ يَدۡخُلُونَ عَلَيۡهِم مِّن كُلِّ بَابٖ ﴾.

Gardens of eternal residence; they will enter them with whoever were righteous among their fathers, their spouses and their descendants. And the angels will enter upon them from every gate. (al-Ra'd: 23).

1- Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr* vol. vii p. 120.

There are also the warders of Hell otherwise known as the *Zabāniyyah*, including nineteen of them who serve as chief warders –We seek refuge in Allāh from Hell–. Allāh (ﷻ) says,

﴿ وَقَالَ ٱلَّذِينَ فِى ٱلنَّارِ لِخَزَنَةِ جَهَنَّمَ ٱدْعُوا۟ رَبَّكُمْ يُخَفِّفْ عَنَّا يَوْمًا مِّنَ ٱلْعَذَابِ ﴾.

And those in the Fire will say to the guards of Hell, 'Entreat your Lord to relieve us of a day of the torment'. (Ghāfir: 49).

﴿ فَلْيَدْعُ نَادِيَهُۥ ﴿١٧﴾ سَنَدْعُ ٱلزَّبَانِيَةَ ﴾.

Then, let him [the culprit] call his associates. We shall call out the guards of Hell. (al-'Alaq: 17,18).

﴿ عَلَيْهَا تِسْعَةَ عَشَرَ ﴿٣٠﴾ وَمَا جَعَلْنَآ أَصْحَٰبَ ٱلنَّارِ إِلَّا مَلَٰٓئِكَةً ۙ وَمَا جَعَلْنَا عِدَّتَهُمْ إِلَّا فِتْنَةً لِّلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا۟ ﴾.

Over it [Hellfire] are nineteen [angels]. And We have appointed none but the angels as guardians of the Fire. And their number We have made only to be a trial for the unbelievers. (al-Muddaththir; 30, 31).

﴿ وَنَادَوْا۟ يَٰمَٰلِكُ لِيَقْضِ عَلَيْنَا رَبُّكَ ۖ قَالَ إِنَّكُم مَّٰكِثُونَ ﴾.

And they will cry out, 'O Mālik[1], let your Lord put us to death'. He will say, 'Indeed, here you must remain'. (al-Zukhruf: 77).

More information about this angel called 'Mālik' and his being a guard of Hell comes in a *ḥadīth* related by *Bukhārī* on the authority of Samura bin Jundub (ﷺ) who quoted Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) as saying,

(رأيت الليلة رجلين أتياني فقالا: الذي يوقد النار مالك خازن النار، وأنا جبريل، وهذا ميكائيل).

I saw tonight two men who came to me and said, 'That [angel] you see kindling the fire is Mālik, the keeper of Hell. I am Jibrīl and this is Mīkāīl. (*Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī*; 3236).

1- i.e. one of the guards of Hell.

The world of the angels also includes visitors of *al-Bait al-Ma'mūr*. A fresh batch of seventy thousand angels enter it every day as reported by Mālik bin Ṣa'ṣa'ah (ﷺ) that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said,

(ثم رفع لي البيت المعمور، فقلت: يا جبريل! ما هذا؟ قال: هذا البيت المعمور. يدخله كل يوم سبعون ألف ملك، إذا خرجوا منه لم يعودوا فيه آخر ما عليهم).

"Then I was shown *al-Bait al-Ma'mūr* [i.e. the frequented house in heaven], and I asked Jibrīl what it was. He replied, 'This is *al-Bait al-Ma'mūr*; seventy thousand angels enter it every day, and when they have left, they never return to it'." (*Bukhārī*: 3207; *Muslim*: 164)[1].

The *Sayyāḥūn* (Those who tour round the globe) are another group among the angels. They seek the company of people who gather to make *Dhikr* (Remembrance of Allāh). A *ḥadīth* narrated by Abu Hurairah (ﷺ) has it that,

(إن لله ملائكة يطوفون في الطرق يلتمسون أهل الذكر فإذا وجدوا قوماً يذكرون الله تنادوا هلموا إلى حاجتكم قال فيحفونهم بأجنحتهم إلى السماء الدنيا ...).

Allāh has some angels who go round searching for those who remember Allāh. As soon as they find any group that engages in the remembrance of Allāh they call each other and say, 'Come on to the object of your pursuit'! The Prophet (ﷺ) added, **'Then the angels encircle them with their wings up to the nearest heaven'.** (*ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī*: 6408; *ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*: 2689)[2].

1- The wording as quoted above is from the Muslim's compilation.

2- The *ḥadīth* as quoted above is from *ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī*.

This group of angels, according to Muslim scholars, are different from others who have been charged with specific duties relating to Allāh's creatures, like the Guardians (*al-Ḥafaẓah*) for example.

It is also firmly established in a *ḥadīth* that part of their duty is to communicate to the Prophet (ﷺ) greetings from his followers. The *ḥadīth* was related by both Aḥmad and al-Nasāi with a sound chain of transmission, and on the authority of ʻAbdullah bin Masʻūd (ﷺ), that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said,

(إن لله عز وجل ملائكة سياحين في الأرض يبلغوني من أمتي السلام).

Allāh (ﷻ) has some angels who tour round the globe; they convey to me greetings from my *ummah* (i.e. my adherents). (*Musnad Aḥmad:* vol. i p. 452; *Sunan al-Nasāī* vol. iii p. 43 *ḥadīth* no. 1282)[1].

Another group of angels are the Honourable Scribes (*Kirām Kātibūn*), whose duty is to record and compute the deeds of Allāh's creatures. Allāh (ﷻ) said,

﴿ وَإِنَّ عَلَيْكُمْ لَحَٰفِظِينَ ﴿١٠﴾ كِرَامًا كَٰتِبِينَ ﴿١١﴾ يَعْلَمُونَ مَا تَفْعَلُونَ ﴾.

And indeed, over you are [appointed] keepers. Honourable, writing down [your deeds]. They know whatever you do. (al-Infiṭār: 10-12).

﴿ إِذْ يَتَلَقَّى ٱلْمُتَلَقِّيَانِ عَنِ ٱلْيَمِينِ وَعَنِ ٱلشِّمَالِ قَعِيدٌ ﴿١٧﴾ مَّا يَلْفِظُ مِن قَوْلٍ إِلَّا لَدَيْهِ رَقِيبٌ عَتِيدٌ ﴾.

[Remember] that the two receivers receive, one sitting on the right and the other on the left. He[2] does not utter a word except that with him is an observer, ready to record [it]. (Qāf: 17-18).

1- The *ḥadīth* as quoted above is from *Musnad Aḥmad.*

2- i.e. human being, male or female.

Mujāhid, a notable scholar, said in his interpretation of these verses, "There is an angel on his right and another on his left. The angel on the right writes down his good deeds, while his bad deeds are also being recorded by the angel seated on the left".

There are some other angels vested with the power to try and interrogate the dead in their graves. They are called "Munkar and Nakīr", as established in some authentic *ḥadīths*. *Bukhāri* and *Muslim* related on the authority of Anas bin Mālik (ﷺ) that the Prophet (ﷺ) said,

(إن العبد إذا وضع في قبره وتولى عنه أصحابه، إنه ليسمع قرع نعالهم أتاه ملكان، فيقعدانه فيقولان: ما كنت تقول في هذا الرجل لمحمد ﷺ فأما المؤمن فيقول أشهد أنه عبد الله ورسوله فيقال له: انظر إلى مقعدك من النار قد أبدلك الله به مقعداً من الجنة فيراهما جميعاً).

When a person has been lowered into his grave and his people have returned home leaving him behind. Even as he certainly hears their footsteps, two angels come to him, get him seated and then say, 'What did you use to say of this man (Muḥammad ﷺ)'? Any dead person who had been a believer will say, 'I testify that he is a servant of Allāh and His Messenger'. Then it will be said to him, 'Look at your seat in the Hellfire; Allāh has given you in place of that another seat in Paradise'. And he will see both seats. (*Bukhāri*: 1374; *Muslim*: 2870)[1].

A similar narration comes from Abu Hurairah (ﷺ), according to both Tirmidhi and Ibn Ḥibbān. The Prophet (ﷺ) was reported to have said,

1- The *ḥadīth* as quoted above is from *ṣaḥīḥ Bukhāri*.

(إذا قبر الميت – أو قال أحدكم– أتاه ملكان أسودان أزرقان يقال لأحدهما الْمُنكَر والآخر النكِير فيقولان: ما كنت تقول في هذا الرجل ...).

When a dead person [or perhaps he said 'one of you'] is buried, two black-blue angels[1] come to him. One of them is called *Al-Munkar* and the other *Al-Nakīr*. They will say, 'What did you use to say concerning this man ...". *(Sunan Tirmidhi; Ibn Ḥibbān)*[2].

Those we have mentioned above are the most famous of the angels whose names or functions are precisely defined in religious texts. It is incumbent upon every person to believe in their existence and accept as true whatever is said concerning them in the divine texts. Allāh (ﷻ) knows best.

The benefits of the belief in the angels

Believing in the angels provides many significant benefits for the believers. These include:

1- Recognizing the sublimity of the Almighty Creator, as well as His perfect power and authority.

2- Appreciation of the kindness and care Allāh (ﷻ) has for His creatures. This is manifested through appointing, for those creatures,

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1- This may also be translated as "two black angels with blue eyes", according to Sheikh Mubarakafūri in his commentary on *Sunan Tirmidhi* (*Tuḥfat al-Aḥwadhi*), vol. iv, p. 155.

2- *Sunan Tirmidhi*, vol. iii p.385, *ḥadīth* no. 1073; *al-Iḥsān fi taqrīb ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān* vol. vii p. 386, *ḥadīth* no. 3117. The *ḥadīth* as quoted above is in accordance with the Tirmidhi's version, who has also classified the *ḥadīth* as a fairly sound *ḥadīth*.

angels who look after them, record their deeds and do many other things in their interest, whether worldly or heavenly.

3- Loving the angels on the basis of what Allāh has guided them to do, such as their worshipping Allāh in a most perfect manner, their assistance for the faithful and their pleading for Allāh's forgiveness on their behalf.

Chapter Two: The Belief in Books Revealed by Allāh

Introduction: Linguistic and Islamic meaning of Revelation (*al-Waḥy*), and its types.

2.1 Rule concerning the belief in Divine Books and the proofs thereof.

2.2 The way of believing in the Divine Books.

2.3 The distortion of the Torah, *Injīl* (Gospel) and some other books excluding the Qur'ān.

2.4 Believing in the Qur'ān and the characteristics of that.

Introduction: Linguistic and Islamic meaning of Revelation (*al-Waḥy*), and its types.

Literally, the word '*waḥy*' is used for any fast and mysterious communication. Thus, *waḥy* may be a gesture, writing, message or inspiration; any information you successfully pass to others, through whatever channel, constitutes a *waḥy*. In this sense, *waḥy* is neither confined to the Prophets nor restricted to Allāh's divine revelations.

The linguistic denotation of the word '*waḥy*' covers, as well, the following areas:

1- Natural inspiration for humankind, such as in the case of the mother of Prophet Mūsa (ﷺ), of which Allāh (ﷻ) said,

﴿ وَأَوْحَيْنَآ إِلَىٰٓ أُمِّ مُوسَىٰٓ أَنْ أَرْضِعِيهِ ﴾.

And we inspired the mother of Mūsa [saying], 'Breast-feed him'. (al-Qaṣaṣ: 7).

2- Instinctive inspiration to animals, like the one to the bees as mentioned in the following verse:

﴿ وَأَوْحَىٰ رَبُّكَ إِلَى ٱلنَّحْلِ أَنِ ٱتَّخِذِى مِنَ ٱلْجِبَالِ بُيُوتًا ﴾.

And your Lord inspired the bees [saying] 'Take your habitations in the mountains…' (al-Naḥl: 68).

3- A quick signal indicating a symbol or suggestion. Such a gesture was once used by Prophet Zakariyah (Zachariah) (ﷺ) to communicate with his people. Allāh says,

﴿فَخَرَجَ عَلَىٰ قَوْمِهِۦ مِنَ ٱلْمِحْرَابِ فَأَوْحَىٰٓ إِلَيْهِمْ أَن سَبِّحُوا۟ بُكْرَةً وَعَشِيًّا﴾.

Then he [Zakariyyah] came out to his people from the prayer chamber and signalled to them [saying], 'Glorify [Allāh] in the morning and afternoon'. (Maryam: 11).

4- The insinuation of the Devil, and the evil he portrays to be fair-seeming in the minds of his confederates. Allāh (ﷻ) says,

﴿وَإِنَّ ٱلشَّيَـٰطِينَ لَيُوحُونَ إِلَىٰٓ أَوْلِيَآئِهِمْ لِيُجَـٰدِلُوكُمْ﴾.

And certainly the devils inspire their associates to dispute with you. (al-An'ām: 121).

5- What Allāh reveals to the angels of His orders. Allāh says,

﴿إِذْ يُوحِى رَبُّكَ إِلَى ٱلْمَلَـٰٓئِكَةِ أَنِّى مَعَكُمْ فَثَبِّتُوا۟ ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا۟﴾.

[Remember] when your Lord revealed to the angels that 'I am indeed with you, so keep firm those who have believed'. (al-Anfāl: 12).

Meaning of Revelation (*Wahy*) from an Islamic viewpoint

That is: "Allāh's communication to His Prophets whatever He likes of His laws or Scriptures, either directly or through an intermediary".

Types of Revelation

Receiving a revelation from Allāh is accomplished in many ways, summed up in the following Qur'ānic verse:

﴿وَمَا كَانَ لِبَشَرٍ أَن يُكَلِّمَهُ ٱللَّهُ إِلَّا وَحْيًا أَوْ مِن وَرَآئِ حِجَابٍ أَوْ يُرْسِلَ رَسُولًا فَيُوحِىَ بِإِذْنِهِۦ مَا يَشَآءُ ۚ إِنَّهُۥ عَلِىٌّ حَكِيمٌ﴾.

And it is not for any human being that Allāh should speak to him, unless through revelation; or from behind a partition; or that He

sends a Messenger to reveal, by His Permission, whatever He will. Indeed, He is Most High, Most Wise. (al-Shūrā: 51).

Here, Allāh declared that His speech or revelation to human beings comes in three categories:

First: Sheer Inspiration. That is what Allāh casts into the heart of a receiver of His revelation, who will know for sure that Allāh, and none else, is the source of such a revelation. The phrase **'Unless through revelation'** (al-Shūrā: 51) in the just quoted verse serves as proof to this. An instance of this type of revelation is also given in a *ḥadīth* narrated by 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd (ﷺ) who quoted the Prophet (ﷺ) as saying,

(إن روح القدس نفث في روعي أنه لن تموت نفس حتى تستكمل رزقها فاتقوا الله وأجملوا في الطلب).

The *Rūḥ al-Quds* [i.e. Archangel Jibrīl] has breathed into my heart that no soul will die unless it had exhausted its [God-given] provision. So fear Allāh and be reasonable in the quest [for your livelihood]. (*Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān*[1]; *al-Mustadrak* vol. ii p.iv; *Sunan Ibn Mājah*, *ḥadīth* no. 2144; Ibn Abī Dunyā, *al-Qanā'ah*; al-Baihaqi, *Shu'ab al-īmān*[2]; *al-Baghawi*, vol.xiv p.304 *ḥadīth* no. 4112)[3].

This type of revelation embodies, according to some scholars, what a Prophet of Allāh sees in a dream. A Qur'ānic account of such a dream which Prophet Ibrāhīm (ﷺ) had goes as follows:

1- See: *Mawārid al-Ẓam'ān*, *ḥadīth* no. 1084, 1085.

2- See: *al-Mughni 'an Ḥaml al-Asfār*, pp. 419,895.

3- This is a sound *ḥadīth* according to Ḥākim and Dhahabi.

﴿قَالَ يَٰبُنَيَّ إِنِّيٓ أَرَىٰ فِي ٱلۡمَنَامِ أَنِّيٓ أَذۡبَحُكَ﴾.

He [Ibrāhīm] said, 'O my son, I have indeed seen in a dream that I should sacrifice you'. (al-Ṣṣāffāt: 102).

Another example is the dream our Prophet, Muḥammad (ﷺ) used to have at the earliest stage of his mission. According to both Bukhāri and Muslim, 'Aisha (رضي الله عنها) said,

(أول ما بدئ به رسول الله ﷺ من الوحي الرؤيا الصالحة في النوم فكان لا يرى رؤيا إلا جاءت مثل فلق الصبح).

The revelation to Allāh's Messenger began with good dreams. He had no dream except that it turned to be real (clear) like bright daylight. (*Bukhāri, ḥadīth* no. 3; *Muslim, ḥadīth* no. 160)[1].

Second: Talking to the recipient directly from behind a partition.

The Prophets with whom Allāh has communicated in this mode include:

- Mūsa (عليه السلام), as mentioned in a number of Qur'ānic verses, such as:

﴿وَكَلَّمَ ٱللَّهُ مُوسَىٰ تَكۡلِيمٗا﴾.

And to Mūsa Allāh has spoken directly. (al-Nisā': 164).

﴿وَلَمَّا جَآءَ مُوسَىٰ لِمِيقَٰتِنَا وَكَلَّمَهُۥ رَبُّهُۥ﴾.

And when Mūsa came at the time and place We had appointed and his Lord spoke to him. (al-A'rāf: 143).

Ādam (عليه السلام), according to a saying of Allāh that:

1- The *ḥadīth* as quoted above is from *ṣaḥīḥ Bukhāri; Muslim* only related an almost similar version.

﴿فَتَلَقَّىٰٓ ءَادَمُ مِن رَّبِّهِۦ كَلِمَٰتٍ﴾.

Then Ādam received from his Lord [some] words. (al-Baqarah: 37).

- Muḥammad (ﷺ), to whom, according to proofs from the *Sunnah*, Allāh has also spoken during his night journey to heaven.

The proof of this category of Allāh's revelation in the earlier quoted verse is the phrase: "**... or from behind a partition**". (al-Shūrā: 51).

Third: Revelation through an angel, such as the coming down of Angel Jibrīl with revelation from Allāh to His Messengers and Prophets. The proof of this form of revelation is in the clause: "**... or that He sends a Messenger to reveal, by His Permission, whatever He will**". (al-Shūrā: 51).

The whole of the Glorious Qur'ān has been revealed in this way; uttered by Almighty Allāh to the hearing of Angel Jibrīl, who in turn conveyed it to Muḥammad (ﷺ). Allāh says,

﴿وَإِنَّهُۥ لَتَنزِيلُ رَبِّ ٱلْعَٰلَمِينَ ﴿١٩٢﴾ نَزَلَ بِهِ ٱلرُّوحُ ٱلْأَمِينُ ﴿١٩٣﴾ عَلَىٰ قَلْبِكَ لِتَكُونَ مِنَ ٱلْمُنذِرِينَ﴾.

And truly it [the Qur'ān] is the revelation of the Lord of all beings. The trustworthy *Ruḥ* has brought it down upon your heart [O Muḥammad], that you may be of the warners... (al-Shu'arā': 192-194).

﴿قُلْ نَزَّلَهُۥ رُوحُ ٱلْقُدُسِ مِن رَّبِّكَ بِٱلْحَقِّ﴾.

Say, 'The Rūḥ[1] of the Quds [Allāh] brought it down from your Lord in truth. (al-Naḥl: 102).

1- i.e. Angel Jibrīl (ﷺ). (Translator)

Jibrīl (ﷺ) communicated Allāh's revelation to our Prophet (ﷺ) using three different methods:

1- He appeared to the Prophet (ﷺ) twice in his real angelic form, as we have mentioned in the previous chapter[1].

2- Sometimes, the revelation would come to the Prophet (ﷺ) as the ringing of a bell, and when it has ceased he recalled whatever Jibrīl had said.

3- Jibrīl (ﷺ) used to appear occasionally in the form of a man, and communicate the message to the Prophet (ﷺ). An example of this is the earlier mentioned *ḥadīth*[2], where Jibrīl came to ask the Prophet (ﷺ) questions relating to the degrees of the religion of Islam.

The Prophet (ﷺ) informed us of the second and third methods mentioned above when he fielded a question put to him by al-Ḥārith bin Hishām (ﷺ), "O Allāh's Messenger, how does the revelation come to you"? He answered,

(أحياناً يأتيني مثل صلصلة الجرس، وهو أشده عليّ، فيفصم عني وقد وعيت عنه ما قــال. وأحياناً يتمثل لي الملك رجلا فيكلمني، فأعي ما يقول).

"Sometimes it comes to me as the ringing of a bell; and after it has ceased, I recall whatever he [Angel Jibrīl] said. This kind is the most painful for me. At times it is the angel who speaks to me as a man, and I grasp whatever he says". (*ṣaḥiḥ Bukhāri: 2; ṣaḥiḥ Muslim : 2333).*

1- Cf. p. 167.
2- Cf. P. 155.

2.1 Rule concerning the belief in Divine Books and the proofs thereof:

What are the Books?

The word '*kutub*', the plural form of '*kitāb*', is the verbal noun of '*kataba-yaktubu*', meaning: to write something. The linguistic usage of the word was later expanded to include the written material itself. The word '*kitāb*' initially was used to denote a sheet of paper and whatever is written on it. Thus, we read in the Glorious Qur'ān:

﴿ يَسْـَٔلُكَ أَهْلُ ٱلْكِتَٰبِ أَن تُنَزِّلَ عَلَيْهِمْ كِتَٰبًا مِّنَ ٱلسَّمَآءِ ﴾.

The people of the Book ask you to bring down to them a book from heaven. (al-Nisā': 153), i.e. a sheet of paper with something written on it.

The Books being referred to in this chapter are those scriptures and scrolls that contained the Words of Allāh, which He has revealed to His Messengers. These consist of what He originally sent in a book form, such as the Torah, and that which He revealed verbally through an angel but was later documented, as was the case with the other divine Books.

Rule concerning the belief in the Books

Believing in all Books revealed by Allāh to His Messengers is an important pillar of Faith and a major principle of Islam, without which one cannot become a believer. There are proofs of this in the Qur'ān and the *Sunnah*. Allāh (ﷻ) says,

﴿ يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوٓاْ ءَامِنُواْ بِٱللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِۦ وَٱلۡكِتَٰبِ ٱلَّذِي نَزَّلَ عَلَىٰ رَسُولِهِۦ وَٱلۡكِتَٰبِ ٱلَّذِيٓ أَنزَلَ مِن قَبۡلُۚ وَمَن يَكۡفُرۡ بِٱللَّهِ وَمَلَٰٓئِكَتِهِۦ وَكُتُبِهِۦ وَرُسُلِهِۦ وَٱلۡيَوۡمِ ٱلۡأٓخِرِ فَقَدۡ ضَلَّ ضَلَٰلَۢا بَعِيدًا ﴾.

O you the faithful, believe in Allāh and His Messenger [Muḥammad ﷺ] and the Book that He sent down upon His Messenger and the Book which He sent down before. And whoever disbelieves in Allāh, His angels, His Books, His Messengers and the Last Day has indeed gone far astray. (al-Nisā': 136).

In this verse Allāh commanded his servants, the faithful to abide by all laws of Faith, including the branches and pillars thereof. Thus, He ordered them to believe in Him, His Messenger, Muḥammad (ﷺ), the Book –i.e. the Qur'ān– that He sent down upon His Messenger, and that which He sent down before, which comprises all the previous Books like the Torah, the *Injīl*[1] and the *Zabūr*[2]. Furthermore, He declared at the end of the verse whoever disbelieves in any of the pillars of Faith as a truly far straying person who has deviated from the straight path. Believing in the Books revealed by Allāh is, of course, one of those mentioned pillars of Faith. Allāh says further,

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1- Allāh's revelation to his Prophet, 'Isā (Jesus) -may the peace of Allāh be upon him- is called *Injīl*, which is commonly rendered in English as "Gospel". (Translator)

2- *Zabūr* is the name Allāh gave to the Book He revealed to His Prophet, Dawūd (David ﷺ). The biblical Book of Psalms usually rendered in Arabic as '*Sifr al-Mazāmīr*' does not precisely represent Allāh's revelation to him. (Translator)

﴿ لَّيْسَ ٱلْبِرَّ أَن تُوَلُّوا۟ وُجُوهَكُمْ قِبَلَ ٱلْمَشْرِقِ وَٱلْمَغْرِبِ وَلَٰكِنَّ ٱلْبِرَّ مَنْ ءَامَنَ بِٱللَّهِ وَٱلْيَوْمِ ٱلْءَاخِرِ وَٱلْمَلَٰٓئِكَةِ وَٱلْكِتَٰبِ وَٱلنَّبِيِّـۧنَ ﴾.

Righteousneess is not that you [merely] turn your faces toward the east or the west, but righteousness is [in] one who believes in Allāh, the Last Day, the angels, the Book and the Prophets... (al-Baqarah: 177).

Here, He stated that real righteousness manifests itself in one's belief in those pillars of Faith, as well as in practicing the virtues that were subsequently mentioned in the verse. Allāh mentioned 'believing in the Book' as a pillar of Faith. The term 'Book' in this verse, according to Ibn Kathīr, is a generic noun embodying all the heavenly revealed books, up till the time they were finally sealed with the coming of the Qur'ān, the noblest of all the Scriptures and the watcher over them[1].

As a way of establishing the belief in all divine Books, Allāh ordered His servants, the faithful, to address the People of the Book[2] in the following tone,

﴿ قُولُوٓا۟ ءَامَنَّا بِٱللَّهِ وَمَآ أُنزِلَ إِلَيْنَا وَمَآ أُنزِلَ إِلَىٰٓ إِبْرَٰهِـۧمَ وَإِسْمَٰعِيلَ وَإِسْحَٰقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ وَٱلْأَسْبَاطِ وَمَآ أُوتِىَ مُوسَىٰ وَعِيسَىٰ وَمَآ أُوتِىَ ٱلنَّبِيُّونَ مِن رَّبِّهِمْ لَا نُفَرِّقُ بَيْنَ أَحَدٍ مِّنْهُمْ وَنَحْنُ لَهُۥ مُسْلِمُونَ ﴾.

Say, 'We believe in Allāh and that which was sent down to us, and that which was sent down to Ibrāhīm [Abraham], Ismā'īl [Ishmael], Isḥāq [Isaac], Ya'qūb [Jacob] and the Descendants[3], and that which was given to Mūsa [Moses] and 'Īsa [Jesus], and

1- *Ibn Kathīr, Tafsīr* vol. i, p. 297.

2- The Jews and the Christians. (Translator)

3- i.e. the descendants of Ya'qūb (Jacob or Israel).

that which was given to the Prophets by their Lord. We make no distinction between any of them, and to Him we submit as Muslims'. (al-Baqarah: 136).

This verse mentions the believers' faith regarding what Allāh has sent down to them through His Messenger (ﷺ), what He had revealed to those prominent Prophets mentioned in the verse, as well as His revelation to all other Prophets as a whole. Furthermore, the verse points out that the believers do not discriminate between the Messengers of Allāh as far as their faith in the Messengers' missions is concerned. The verse has thus contained belief in all Messengers and in the books revealed to them, just as there are many other verses of the Glorious Qur'ān referring to this as well.

The *Sunnah* similarly attests to the necessity of believing in the divine Books, and declares such as a pillar of Faith. This is evident in the *ḥadīth* of Jibrīl (ﷺ), when he asked the Prophet (ﷺ) about the pillars of Faith, and Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ), in his response, mentioned believing in the Books as one of those pillars. This *ḥadīth* has been quoted earlier, and we see no need to repeat it here[1].

It is, therefore, established that believing in the divine Books, all without exception, is an obligation. Similarly, one should believe in them as revelations from Allāh, sent down to His Messengers with truth, guidance and light. Moreover, he should see whoever disbelieves in them or denies any part thereof as an unbeliever, and no more as a Muslim.

1- Please see p. 155.

The benefits of believing in the Divine Books

Believing in Books revealed by Allāh has many great impacts on the believer. These include:

1- Being grateful to Allāh (ﷻ) for the kindness and care He has for His creatures, which have resulted in sending down books that contain guidance for them to their worldly and heavenly benefits and interest.

2- Manifestation of Allāh's wisdom; having prescribed in those Books laws that are suitable for every nation. Moreover, the laws of the Glorious Qur'ān, being the seal of the Books, conform to all ages, and are relevant in any place until the Day of Resurrection.

3- Affirmation of the talking/speaking attribute as an unquestionable quality for Allāh (ﷻ), as well as believing in the uniqueness of His speech. It is not comparable to the speech or words of His creation, who, equally, lack the potency to produce the like of His words.

2.2 The method of believing in the Divine Books

Believing in Books revealed by Allāh consists of many aspects, which, according to many available proofs, are indispensable for any one who wants to affirm his/her faith regarding this important pillar of Faith. These are:

1- Believing conclusively that the Books were all sent down from Allāh (ﷻ). That they are really His words, not that of anyone else, and that He actually uttered their contents as exactly as He willed and in a manner He has chosen. Allāh Himself has said,

﴿ ٱللَّهُ لَآ إِلَٰهَ إِلَّا هُوَ ٱلۡحَيُّ ٱلۡقَيُّومُ ﴿٢﴾ نَزَّلَ عَلَيۡكَ ٱلۡكِتَٰبَ بِٱلۡحَقِّ مُصَدِّقٗا لِّمَا بَيۡنَ يَدَيۡهِ وَأَنزَلَ ٱلتَّوۡرَىٰةَ وَٱلۡإِنجِيلَ ﴿٣﴾ مِن قَبۡلُ هُدٗى لِّلنَّاسِ وَأَنزَلَ ٱلۡفُرۡقَانَۗ إِنَّ ٱلَّذِينَ كَفَرُواْ بِـَٔايَٰتِ ٱللَّهِ لَهُمۡ عَذَابٞ شَدِيدٞۗ وَٱللَّهُ عَزِيزٞ ذُو ٱنتِقَامٍ ﴾.

Allāh, none has the right to be worshipped but He, the Ever-living, Who sustains and protects all that exists. He has revealed to you [Muḥammad] the Book in truth, confirming that which was [revealed] before it, and He revealed the Torah and the *Injīl*. Before, as guidance for mankind, and He sent down the Criterion [i.e. the Qur'ān]. Indeed those who disbelieve in the revelations of Allāh shall have a severe punishment. And Allāh is Almighty, Owner of Retribution. (Āl-'Imrān: 2-4).

Here, Allāh informed us that He did reveal those books mentioned in the verse, the Torah, the *Injil* and the Qur'ān from Himself; an indication that they are His words, originated from Him alone and not from any other being. Thus, He concluded the verse by threatening to inflict stern punishment on whoever disbelieves in his revelations.

Allāh also said concerning the Torah,

﴿ إِنَّآ أَنزَلۡنَا ٱلتَّوۡرَىٰةَ فِيهَا هُدٗى وَنُورٞۚ ﴾.

Indeed, We sent down the Torah, in which was guidance and light. (al- Mā'idah: 44).

Allāh (ﷻ) disclosed here that the Torah was from Him, and so were the guidance and light contained therein. As He informs us of the Jews in another context, He declares the Torah as part of His words. He says,

﴿أَفَتَطْمَعُونَ أَن يُؤْمِنُوا لَكُمْ وَقَدْ كَانَ فَرِيقٌ مِّنْهُمْ يَسْمَعُونَ كَلَامَ اللَّهِ ثُمَّ يُحَرِّفُونَهُ مِن بَعْدِ مَا عَقَلُوهُ﴾.

Do you [O believers] covet that they would believe in your religion, while a party of them used to hear the Words of Allāh and then distort it after they had understood it. (al-Baqarah: 75).

The Torah was the words of Allāh that the Jews, according to this verse, heard and then distorted. This view has been expressed by al-Suddi, Ibn Zaid and many other scholars of the Qur'ānic exegesis (*Tafsir*). Concerning the *Injīl*, Allāh also said,

﴿وَلْيَحْكُمْ أَهْلُ الْإِنجِيلِ بِمَا أَنزَلَ اللَّهُ فِيهِ﴾.

Let the people of the *Injīl* judge by what Allāh has revealed therein. (al- Mā'idah: 47). That is the 'Dos' and 'Don'ts', which are, definitely, part of the words of Allāh.

He also says of the Glorious Qur'ān,

﴿الر كِتَابٌ أُحْكِمَتْ آيَاتُهُ ثُمَّ فُصِّلَتْ مِن لَّدُنْ حَكِيمٍ خَبِيرٍ﴾.

Alif –Lām– Rā[1]. [This is] a Book whose verses are perfected and then presented in detail, from [One Who is] All-Wise, Well-Acquainted [with all things]. (Hūd: 1).

In another verse, Allāh addressed His Messenger (ﷺ) saying,

﴿وَإِنَّكَ لَتُلَقَّى الْقُرْآنَ مِن لَّدُنْ حَكِيمٍ عَلِيمٍ﴾.

And indeed, you receive the Qur'ān from [One Who is] All-Wise All-Knowing. (al-Naml: 6).

He also said,

1- These letters are part of the miracle of the Qur'ān; none but Allāh alone knows their meaning. (Translator)

﴿ قُلْ نَزَّلَهُۥ رُوحُ ٱلْقُدُسِ مِن رَّبِّكَ ﴾.

Say, *Rūh al-Quds* (Angel Jibrīl) has brought it [the Qur'ān] down from your Lord. (al-Nahl: 102).

﴿ وَإِنْ أَحَدٌ مِّنَ ٱلْمُشْرِكِينَ ٱسْتَجَارَكَ فَأَجِرْهُ حَتَّىٰ يَسْمَعَ كَلَـٰمَ ٱللَّهِ ﴾.

And if anyone among the polytheists seeks your protection, then grant him protection so that he may hear the Words of Allāh. (al-Tawbah: 6).

It is this Qur'ān sent down by Allāh upon His Messenger (ﷺ), and nothing else, that the polytheists have been ordered to listen to; hence, the Qur'ān is certainly words of Allāh.

2- Believing that the Books have invited people to worship Allāh alone, and that they are sources of goodness, guidance and light. Allāh says,

﴿ مَا كَانَ لِبَشَرٍ أَن يُؤْتِيَهُ ٱللَّهُ ٱلْكِتَـٰبَ وَٱلْحُكْمَ وَٱلنُّبُوَّةَ ثُمَّ يَقُولَ لِلنَّاسِ كُونُوا۟ عِبَادًا لِّى مِن دُونِ ٱللَّهِ ﴾.

It is not for a human being that Allāh should give him the Book, knowledge of the law of religion, and Prophethood, and then he would say to the people, 'Be servants to me rather than to Allāh'. (Āl-'Imrān: 79).

Here, Allāh explained that it is unbecoming that a human being, to whom Allāh has given His Scripture, understanding of His laws and Prophethood, should then ask people to take him as a deity instead of Him. The reason being that all the Books revealed by Allāh have enjoined the worship of Him alone.

While explaining that His Books brought truth and guidance to mankind, Allāh (ﷻ) says,

﴿ نَزَّلَ عَلَيْكَ ٱلْكِتَٰبَ بِٱلْحَقِّ مُصَدِّقًا لِّمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ وَأَنزَلَ ٱلتَّوْرَىٰةَ وَٱلْإِنجِيلَ ﴿٣﴾ مِن قَبْلُ هُدًى لِّلنَّاسِ ﴾.

He has revealed to you [Muḥammad] the Book in truth, confirming that which was [revealed] before it, and He revealed the Torah and the *Injīl*. Before, as guidance for mankind. (Āl-'Imrān: 3, 4).

﴿ كَانَ ٱلنَّاسُ أُمَّةً وَٰحِدَةً فَبَعَثَ ٱللَّهُ ٱلنَّبِيِّـۧنَ مُبَشِّرِينَ وَمُنذِرِينَ وَأَنزَلَ مَعَهُمُ ٱلْكِتَٰبَ بِٱلْحَقِّ ﴾.

Mankind was one community [of one religion before their deviation]; then Allāh sent Prophets as bearers of good news and as warners, and He sent down with them the Book in truth. (al-Baqarah: 213).

﴿ إِنَّآ أَنزَلْنَا ٱلتَّوْرَىٰةَ فِيهَا هُدًى وَنُورٌ ﴾.

Indeed, We sent down the Torah, in which was guidance and light. (al-Mā'idah: 44).

﴿ وَءَاتَيْنَٰهُ ٱلْإِنجِيلَ فِيهِ هُدًى وَنُورٌ ﴾.

And We gave him [Jesus] the *Injīl*, in which was guidance and light. (al-Mā'idah: 46).

﴿ شَهْرُ رَمَضَانَ ٱلَّذِىٓ أُنزِلَ فِيهِ ٱلْقُرْءَانُ هُدًى لِّلنَّاسِ وَبَيِّنَٰتٍ مِّنَ ٱلْهُدَىٰ وَٱلْفُرْقَانِ ﴾.

The month of Ramaḍān in which was revealed the Qur'ān, as guidance for mankind and clear proofs of guidance and the criterion. (al-Baqarah: 185).

In addition to other verses of the Qur'ān, which imply that the Books of Allāh (ﷻ) have really brought from Him guidance and light.

3- Believing that the Books of Allāh confirm one another, and as such, no contradiction exists between them. Allāh says concerning the Glorious Qur'ān,

﴿ وَأَنزَلْنَآ إِلَيْكَ ٱلْكِتَـٰبَ بِٱلْحَقِّ مُصَدِّقًا لِّمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ مِنَ ٱلْكِتَـٰبِ وَمُهَيْمِنًا عَلَيْهِ ﴾.

And We have sent down to you [Muḥammad] the Book in truth, confirming that which preceded it of the Scripture and as a Watcher over it. (al-Mā'idah: 48).

While He also said of the *Injīl*,

﴿ وَءَاتَيْنَـٰهُ ٱلْإِنجِيلَ فِيهِ هُدًى وَنُورٌ وَمُصَدِّقًا لِّمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ مِنَ ٱلتَّوْرَىٰةِ ﴾.

And We gave him [Jesus] the *Injīl*, in which was guidance and light, and confirming that which preceded it of the Torah. (al-Mā'idah: 46).

We must therefore believe in this, and hold firmly that the Books of Allāh are free from contradiction or inconsistency. That being one of the outstanding characteristics, which distinguish the Books of Allāh from the works of created beings, and His Word from that of His creatures. Anything written by a created being usually contains flaws, shortcomings and discrepancies; hence, Allāh says while describing the Glorious Qur'ān,

﴿ وَلَوْ كَانَ مِنْ عِندِ غَيْرِ ٱللَّهِ لَوَجَدُوا۟ فِيهِ ٱخْتِلَـٰفًا كَثِيرًا ﴾.

Had it been from [anyone] other than Allāh, they would surely have found therein many contradictions. (al-Nisā': 82).

4- Believing in those Books of Allāh, which He has specifically named for us. One should accept as true whatever Allāh or His Messenger have said concerning them. These books are:

(i) The Torah; the Book Allāh revealed to Mūsa (ﷺ). Allāh says,

﴿ وَلَقَدْ ءَاتَيْنَا مُوسَى ٱلْكِتَٰبَ مِنۢ بَعْدِ مَآ أَهْلَكْنَا ٱلْقُرُونَ ٱلْأُولَىٰ بَصَآئِرَ لِلنَّاسِ ﴾.

And We gave the Book to Mūsa after we had destroyed the generations of old, as insights for the people. (al-Qaṣaṣ: 43).

In the lengthy *ḥadīth* of Intercession (*al-Shafā'ah*)[1], related by both Bukhāri and Muslim on the authority of Anas bin Mālik (ﷺ), the Prophet (ﷺ) was reported to have said,

(... فيأتون إبراهيم فيقول: لست هُنَاكم ويذكر خطيئته التي أصابها ولكن ائتـوا موسـى عبداً آتاه الله التوراة وكلمه تكليماً).

"Then, [on the Day of Resurrection] people will come to Ibrāhīm, who will say, 'I am not fit for that -and he would mention the sin he had committed- but you should go to Mūsa, whom Allāh gave the Torah and spoke to directly'." (*Bukhāri*: 7410; *Muslim*: 193).

Allāh revealed to Musa the Torah, written on some tablets. He says,

﴿ وَكَتَبْنَا لَهُۥ فِى ٱلْأَلْوَاحِ مِن كُلِّ شَىْءٍ ﴾.

And We wrote for him on the tablets lessons from all things and an explanation for all things. (al-A'rāf: 145).

Ibn 'Abbās said, "i.e. the tablets of the Torah". According to Abū Hurairah (ﷺ), the Prophet (ﷺ) narrated part of a debate between Prophets Ādam and Mūsa (عليهما السلام) as follows:

(.. قال له آدم: يا موسى اصطفاك الله بكلامه وخط لك التوراة بيده).

"Ādam said, 'O Mūsa, Allāh favoured you by talking [directly] to you, and He wrote for you the Torah with His own Hand". (*Bukhāri*: 6614; *Muslim*: 2652[2]).

1- i.e. on the Day of Resurrection. (Translator)

2- Both Bukhāri and Muslim narrated this *ḥadīth* through many channels.

The Torah was the most important of all the Books revealed to the Children of Israel, and it contained details of their law and judgements. Although the Torah was originally the Book revealed to Mūsa (عليه السلام), all the Prophets sent to the Children of Israel after Mūsa (عليه السلام) have also acted in accordance with its laws. Allāh says,

﴿ إِنَّا أَنزَلْنَا التَّوْرَاةَ فِيهَا هُدًى وَنُورٌ ۚ يَحْكُمُ بِهَا النَّبِيُّونَ الَّذِينَ أَسْلَمُوا لِلَّذِينَ هَادُوا وَالرَّبَّانِيُّونَ وَالْأَحْبَارُ بِمَا اسْتُحْفِظُوا مِن كِتَابِ اللَّهِ وَكَانُوا عَلَيْهِ شُهَدَاءَ ﴾.

Indeed, We sent down the Torah, in which was guidance and light. The Prophets who submitted [to Allāh] judged for the Jews by its standard, as did the rabbis and learned authorities [among the Jews], for they were entrusted with the protection of the Book of Allāh, and they were witnesses thereto. (al-Mā'idah: 44).

However, Allāh informed us in His book how the Jews have distorted and altered the Torah, as we shall elaborate more on this in the next topic, if Allāh so wills.

(ii) The Injīl

Al-injīl is the Book Allāh sent to ʿĪsa the son of Maryam (Jesus the son of Mary) (عليهما السلام). Allāh says,

﴿ وَقَفَّيْنَا عَلَىٰ آثَارِهِم بِعِيسَى ابْنِ مَرْيَمَ مُصَدِّقًا لِّمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ مِنَ التَّوْرَاةِ ۖ وَآتَيْنَاهُ الْإِنجِيلَ فِيهِ هُدًى وَنُورٌ وَمُصَدِّقًا لِّمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ مِنَ التَّوْرَاةِ وَهُدًى وَمَوْعِظَةً لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ ﴾.

And in their footsteps We sent ʿĪsa (Jesus) the son of Maryam confirming the Torah which came before him; and We gave him the *Injīl*, in which was guidance and light and confirming that which preceded it of the Torah, as guidance and admonition for the pious. (al-Mā'idah: 46).

As it is evident in the above verse, Allāh revealed the *Injīl* to confirm and endorse what is in the Torah which preceded it. Hence, according to some scholars[1], the area of difference between the Torah and the *Injīl* is limited to certain few rules, which had been subject of disagreement among them. In a Qur'ānic verse, Al-Masīḥ (i.e. Prophet 'Īsa -Jesus- ﷺ) himself is quoted as having said to the Children of Israel,

﴿وَلِأُحِلَّ لَكُم بَعْضَ ٱلَّذِى حُرِّمَ عَلَيْكُمْ﴾.

And [I have come] to make lawful for you part of what was forbidden to you. (Āl-'Imrān: 50).

Allāh also disclosed in the Qur'ān that both the Torah and the *Injīl* have clearly heralded the coming of our Prophet, Muḥammad (ﷺ). Allāh says,

﴿ٱلَّذِينَ يَتَّبِعُونَ ٱلرَّسُولَ ٱلنَّبِىَّ ٱلْأُمِّىَّ ٱلَّذِى يَجِدُونَهُۥ مَكْتُوبًا عِندَهُمْ فِى ٱلتَّوْرَىٰةِ وَٱلْإِنجِيلِ﴾.

Those who follow the Messenger, the unlettered Prophet, who they find mentioned in the Torah and the *Injīl* that are with them. (al-A'rāf: 157).

Just as the Torah, the *Injīl* also suffered distortion. We are going to discuss this further in the coming topic, with the grace of Allāh.

(iii) *Zabūr*

The Book sent to Dawūd (David) (ﷺ) is called Zabūr. Allāh says,

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1- Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr*, vol. ii, p. 36.

﴿ وَءَاتَيْنَا دَاوُۥدَ زَبُورًا ﴾.

And to Dawūd We gave *Zabūr*. (al-Nisā': 163).. Qatādah, a renowned Muslim scholar, commented on the meaning of this verse saying, "We used to hear that it [the Zabūr] was a supplication Allāh taught Dawūd, a sort of praising Allāh and glorifying Him; it consisted of no rules of lawful and unlawful, no obligations, limits or legally stipulated punishment".

(iv) The Scriptures of Ibrāhīm (Abraham) and Mūsā (Moses), which have been mentioned twice in the Qur'ān as follows:

Allāh says in *Surah al-Najm* (Chapter 53),

﴿ أَمْ لَمْ يُنَبَّأْ بِمَا فِي صُحُفِ مُوسَىٰ ﴿٣٦﴾ وَإِبْرَٰهِيمَ ٱلَّذِى وَفَّىٰٓ ﴿٣٧﴾ أَلَّا تَزِرُ وَازِرَةٌ وِزْرَ أُخْرَىٰ ﴿٣٨﴾ وَأَن لَّيْسَ لِلْإِنسَٰنِ إِلَّا مَا سَعَىٰ ﴾.

Or has he not been informed of what was in the Scriptures of Mūsa. And Ibrāhīm who fulfilled [his obligations]. That no laden person shall bear the load [sins] of another. And that man has only that for which he makes effort. (al-Najm: 36-39).

He has also said in *Surah al-A'lā* (Chapter 87),

﴿ قَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَن تَزَكَّىٰ ﴿١٤﴾ وَذَكَرَ ٱسْمَ رَبِّهِۦ فَصَلَّىٰ ﴿١٥﴾ بَلْ تُؤْثِرُونَ ٱلْحَيَوٰةَ ٱلدُّنْيَا ﴿١٦﴾ وَٱلْءَاخِرَةُ خَيْرٌ وَأَبْقَىٰٓ ﴿١٧﴾ إِنَّ هَٰذَا لَفِى ٱلصُّحُفِ ٱلْأُولَىٰ ﴿١٨﴾ صُحُفِ إِبْرَٰهِيمَ وَمُوسَىٰ ﴾.

Indeed, he has prospered; who purifies himself. And remembers the name of his Lord and prays [i.e. performs *ṣalāh*]. Nay, you prefer the life of this world. While the Hereafter is better and more lasting. Truly, this is in the Scriptures of the earliest [revelation]. The Scriptures of Ibrāhīm and Mūsā. (al-A'lā: 14-19).

Here, Allāh disclosed part of His revelation as contained in those Scriptures He revealed upon two of His Messengers, Ibrāhīm and Mūsā. (عليهما السلام). The knowledge of all things belongs to Allāh.

(v) The Glorious Qur'ān

The Qur'ān is that Book Allāh revealed upon our Prophet, Muḥammad (ﷺ), to confirm and watch over the previous Books. The Glorious Qur'ān is Allāh's final revelation, and the most honourable, most perfect of all His Scriptures. It has also abrogated laws of the past Scriptures; its mission is general, meant for the entire humankind and *jinn*. Allāh says,

﴿ وَأَنزَلْنَآ إِلَيْكَ ٱلْكِتَـٰبَ بِٱلْحَقِّ مُصَدِّقًا لِّمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ مِنَ ٱلْكِتَـٰبِ وَمُهَيْمِنًا عَلَيْهِ ۖ ﴾.

And We have sent down to you [Muḥammad] the Book in truth, as a confirmation and watcher over the Books that preceded it. (al-Mā'idah: 48). Watching over those Books implies being witness and judge over them.

﴿ قُلْ أَىُّ شَىْءٍ أَكْبَرُ شَهَـٰدَةً ۖ قُلِ ٱللَّهُ ۖ شَهِيدٌۢ بَيْنِى وَبَيْنَكُمْ ۚ وَأُوحِىَ إِلَىَّ هَـٰذَا ٱلْقُرْءَانُ لِأُنذِرَكُم بِهِۦ وَمَنۢ بَلَغَ ۚ ﴾.

Say, 'What is most weighty in testimony'? Say, 'Allāh is Witness between me and you. And this Qur'ān was sent to me that, with it, I may warn you and whomever it may reach'. (al-An'ām: 19).

﴿ تَبَارَكَ ٱلَّذِى نَزَّلَ ٱلْفُرْقَانَ عَلَىٰ عَبْدِهِۦ لِيَكُونَ لِلْعَـٰلَمِينَ نَذِيرًا ﴾.

Blessed be He [Allāh] Who sent down the Criterion [The Qur'ān] upon His servant that he may be to the worlds a warner. (al-Furqān: 1).
Aside from the appellation 'the Qur'ān', this Book has many other names, of which the most famous are:

- ***al- Furqān*** **(The Criterion),**
- ***al-Kitāb*** **(The Book),**
- ***al-Tanzīl*** **(The Revelation), and**
- ***al-Dhikr*** **(The Reminder).**

Our faith in the aforementioned Books (i-v) should be in accordance with the information we have in the religious texts concerning their names and to whom they have been revealed. We should also believe in what Allāh and His Messenger (ﷺ) have told us regarding either the Books themselves, or stories of the people to whom they were sent.

5- Believing strongly that the Glorious Qur'ān has abrogated all other Books or Scriptures, which Allāh previously revealed to His Messengers. It is not allowed, after the Qur'ān has been revealed, that anyone of humankind and *jinn*; people of the past Scriptures and others alike, should worship Allāh or seek justice through something different from this Qur'ān. Proofs in the Book of Allāh and *Sunnah* of His Messenger (ﷺ) on this are many. Allāh says,

﴿ تَبَارَكَ ٱلَّذِى نَزَّلَ ٱلْفُرْقَانَ عَلَىٰ عَبْدِهِۦ لِيَكُونَ لِلْعَـٰلَمِينَ نَذِيرًا ﴾.

Blessed be He [Allāh] Who sent down the Criterion [The Qur'ān] upon His servant that he may be to the worlds a warner. (al-Furqān: 1).

﴿ يَـٰٓأَهْلَ ٱلْكِتَـٰبِ قَدْ جَآءَكُمْ رَسُولُنَا يُبَيِّنُ لَكُمْ كَثِيرًا مِّمَّا كُنتُمْ تُخْفُونَ مِنَ ٱلْكِتَـٰبِ وَيَعْفُوا۟ عَن كَثِيرٍ ۚ قَدْ جَآءَكُم مِّنَ ٱللَّهِ نُورٌ وَكِتَـٰبٌ مُّبِينٌ ﴿١٥﴾ يَهْدِى بِهِ ٱللَّهُ مَنِ ٱتَّبَعَ رِضْوَٰنَهُۥ سُبُلَ ٱلسَّلَـٰمِ وَيُخْرِجُهُم مِّنَ ٱلظُّلُمَـٰتِ إِلَى ٱلنُّورِ بِإِذْنِهِۦ وَيَهْدِيهِمْ إِلَىٰ صِرَٰطٍ مُّسْتَقِيمٍ ﴾.

O people of the Book, there has come to you Our Messenger making clear to you much of what you used to hide of the Book

and overlooking much. There has come to you from Allāh a light and a clear Book. By which Allāh guides those who pursue His pleasure to the ways of peace, and brings them out from darkness into the light by His Permission, and guides them to a straight path. (al-Mā'idah: 15, 16).

Allāh also directed His Messenger to make this Qur'ān the basis for his judgment between the people of the Book. He says,

﴿فَٱحۡكُم بَيۡنَهُم بِمَآ أَنزَلَ ٱللَّهُۖ وَلَا تَتَّبِعۡ أَهۡوَآءَهُمۡ عَمَّا جَآءَكَ مِنَ ٱلۡحَقِّۚ﴾.

So judge between them by what Allāh has revealed, and do not follow their inclinations away from what has come to you of the truth. (al-Mā'idah: 48).

﴿وَأَنِ ٱحۡكُم بَيۡنَهُم بِمَآ أَنزَلَ ٱللَّهُ وَلَا تَتَّبِعۡ أَهۡوَآءَهُمۡ وَٱحۡذَرۡهُمۡ أَن يَفۡتِنُوكَ عَنۢ بَعۡضِ مَآ أَنزَلَ ٱللَّهُ إِلَيۡكَۖ﴾.

And judge between them by what Allāh has revealed and do not follow their inclinations. And beware of them, lest they tempt you away from some of what Allāh has revealed to you. (al-Mā'idah: 49).

A proof from the *Sunnah* in this regard comes in the body of a *ḥadīth* narrated by Jābir bin 'Abdullah (رضي الله عنهما). 'Umar bin al-Khaṭṭāb (رضي الله عنه) came to the Prophet (ﷺ) with a book he had received from a follower of the Past Scriptures (i.e. a Jew or a Christian) and read it to him. The Prophet got angry and said,

(أمتهوكون فيها يا ابن الخطاب! والذي نفسي بيده لقد جئتكم بها بيضاء نقية، لا تسألوهم عن شيء فيخبروكم بحق فتكذبوا به، أو بباطل فتصدقوا، والذي نفسي بيده، لو أنّ موسى كان حياً، ما وسعه إلا أن يتبعني).

Are you all confused about my mission, oh you ['Umar] bin al-Khaṭṭāb! By Him in whose Hand is my life, I have brought it to

you in a crystal-clear form. Do not ask them anything [concerning your religion], lest they tell you a truth and you [erroneously] deny it, or they fabricate a lie but you [mistakenly] believe in it. By Him in whose Hand is my life, If [Prophet] Mūsa (ﷺ) were to live today, he would have no alternative but to follow me. This *ḥadīth* is of *ḥasan* (fairly sound) grade, considering all the chains of transmission[1].

Thus, we have explained the necessary belief concerning the Books of Allāh as a whole. A more detailed discussion regarding what one should believe regarding the Glorious Qur'ān in particular is expected to follow under a separate heading, if Allāh so wills.

1- Related by Aḥmad, al-Bazzār, al-Baihaqi and others, cf. *Musnad Aḥmad*: vol. iii, p. 387; *Kashf al-Astār*: 134; *Shu'ab al- Īmān*: 177.

2.3 The distortion of the Torah, the *Injīl* and some other divine Books excluding the Qur'ān.

The People of the Book and distortion of the words of Allāh

Allāh (ﷻ) has spoken of the distortion, alteration and misrepresentation suffered by His Books at the hands of the People of the past Scriptures. As for the Jews, Allāh says in the Glorious Qur'ān,

﴿أَفَتَطْمَعُونَ أَن يُؤْمِنُوا لَكُمْ وَقَدْ كَانَ فَرِيقٌ مِّنْهُمْ يَسْمَعُونَ كَلَامَ اللَّهِ ثُمَّ يُحَرِّفُونَهُ مِن بَعْدِ مَا عَقَلُوهُ﴾.

Do you [O believers] covet that they would believe in your religion, while a party of them used to hear the Words of Allāh and then distort it (deliberately) after they had understood it. (al-Baqarah: 75).

﴿مِّنَ الَّذِينَ هَادُوا يُحَرِّفُونَ الْكَلِمَ عَن مَّوَاضِعِهِ﴾.

Among the Jews are those who distort words from their contexts. (al-Nisā': 46).

And concerning the Christians, Allāh has also said,

﴿وَمِنَ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا إِنَّا نَصَارَىٰ أَخَذْنَا مِيثَاقَهُمْ فَنَسُوا حَظًّا مِّمَّا ذُكِّرُوا بِهِ فَأَغْرَيْنَا بَيْنَهُمُ الْعَدَاوَةَ وَالْبَغْضَاءَ إِلَىٰ يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ ۚ وَسَوْفَ يُنَبِّئُهُمُ اللَّهُ بِمَا كَانُوا يَصْنَعُونَ ۝ يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ قَدْ جَاءَكُمْ رَسُولُنَا يُبَيِّنُ لَكُمْ كَثِيرًا مِّمَّا كُنتُمْ تُخْفُونَ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ وَيَعْفُو عَن كَثِيرٍ﴾.

And from those who say, 'We are Christians' we took their covenant, but they forgot [and abandoned[1]] a portion of that of

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1- *Al-Sa'di, Taysir al-Karīm al-Raḥmān*, p. 188. (Translator)

which they were warned. So We stirred up enmity and hatred among them until the Day of Resurrection. And Allāh is going to inform them about what they used to do. O people of the Book, there has come to you Our Messenger making clear to you much of what you used to hide of the Book and overlooking much. (al-Mā'idah: 14, 15).

These verses are witnesses to the fact that the Jews and the Christians have distorted the Books revealed to them. Their distortion of those Books was sometimes by adding something to their contents and at times by removing something from it. As regards the former Allāh says,

﴿ فَوَيْلٌ لِّلَّذِينَ يَكْتُبُونَ ٱلْكِتَٰبَ بِأَيْدِيهِمْ ثُمَّ يَقُولُونَ هَٰذَا مِنْ عِندِ ٱللَّهِ لِيَشْتَرُوا۟ بِهِۦ ثَمَنًا قَلِيلًا ۖ فَوَيْلٌ لَّهُم مِّمَّا كَتَبَتْ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَوَيْلٌ لَّهُم مِّمَّا يَكْسِبُونَ ﴾.

So woe to those who write the 'book' with their own hands, then say, 'This is from Allāh', in order to exchange it for a miserable price. Woe to them for what their hands have written and woe to them for what they earn. (al-Baqarah: 79).

Concerning their role in omitting part of what Allāh has revealed in His Books, He says,

﴿ يَٰٓأَهْلَ ٱلْكِتَٰبِ قَدْ جَآءَكُمْ رَسُولُنَا يُبَيِّنُ لَكُمْ كَثِيرًا مِّمَّا كُنتُمْ تُخْفُونَ مِنَ ٱلْكِتَٰبِ ﴾.

O people of the Book, there has come to you Our Messenger making clear to you much of what you used to hide of the Book. (al-Mā'idah: 15).

﴿قُلْ مَنْ أَنزَلَ ٱلْكِتَٰبَ ٱلَّذِى جَآءَ بِهِۦ مُوسَىٰ نُورًا وَهُدًى لِّلنَّاسِ ۖ تَجْعَلُونَهُۥ قَرَاطِيسَ تُبْدُونَهَا وَتُخْفُونَ كَثِيرًا ۖ﴾.

Say, 'Who sent down the Book that Mūsa brought; a light and guidance for the people. You [Jews] make it into [separate] sheets, disclosing [some of] it and concealing much'. (al-An'ām: 91).

The distortion of the Torah and the *Injīl*, and proofs of this.

Having mentioned the distortion of Books revealed to the people of the Book in general, here we are going to concentrate on proofs relating specifically to the distortion of both the Torah and the *Injīl*.

As for the Torah, the proofs thereof include:

﴿قُلْ مَنْ أَنزَلَ ٱلْكِتَـٰبَ ٱلَّذِى جَآءَ بِهِۦ مُوسَىٰ نُورًا وَهُدًى لِّلنَّاسِ ۖ تَجْعَلُونَهُۥ قَرَاطِيسَ تُبْدُونَهَا وَتُخْفُونَ كَثِيرًا ۖ وَعُلِّمْتُم مَّا لَمْ تَعْلَمُوٓا۟ أَنتُمْ وَلَآ ءَابَآؤُكُمْ ۖ قُلِ ٱللَّهُ ۖ ثُمَّ ذَرْهُمْ فِى خَوْضِهِمْ يَلْعَبُونَ﴾.

Say, 'Who sent down the Book that Mūsa brought; a light and guidance for the people. You [Jews] make it into [separate] sheets, disclosing [some of] it and concealing much', and you[1] were taught that which neither you nor your fathers knew. Say, 'Allāh [revealed it]', then leave them in their vain discussion, amusing themselves. (al-An'ām: 91).

That is to say, "You [Jews] transfer the contents of that Book brought by Mūsā onto pieces of paper, to facilitate what you intend of distortion and misrepresentation, and to conceal what is mentioned in that Book, of the attributes of Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ)".

Allāh also said,

﴿أَفَتَطْمَعُونَ أَن يُؤْمِنُوا۟ لَكُمْ وَقَدْ كَانَ فَرِيقٌ مِّنْهُمْ يَسْمَعُونَ كَلَـٰمَ ٱللَّهِ ثُمَّ يُحَرِّفُونَهُۥ مِنۢ بَعْدِ مَا عَقَلُوهُ﴾.

Do you [O believers] covet that they would believe in your religion, while a party of them used to hear the Words of Allāh and then distort it after they had understood it. (al-Baqarah: 75).

1- i.e. the Jews, or the Muslims who are taught by the Glorious Qur'ān. (Translator)

Al-Suddi, a prominent Muslim scholar, said, "That was the Torah; they distorted it". Another scholar, Ibn Zayd further says, "They twist the Torah that Allāh has revealed for them; they make the lawful therein unlawful and the unlawful lawful. They also misrepresent the truth therein as falsehood and falsehood as the truth".

As regards the *Injīl,* here is what Allāh told us in His Book

﴿وَمِنَ ٱلَّذِينَ قَالُوٓاْ إِنَّا نَصَٰرَىٰٓ أَخَذْنَا مِيثَٰقَهُمْ فَنَسُواْ حَظًّا مِّمَّا ذُكِّرُواْ بِهِۦ فَأَغْرَيْنَا بَيْنَهُمُ ٱلْعَدَاوَةَ وَٱلْبَغْضَآءَ إِلَىٰ يَوْمِ ٱلْقِيَٰمَةِ ۚ وَسَوْفَ يُنَبِّئُهُمُ ٱللَّهُ بِمَا كَانُواْ يَصْنَعُونَ ﴿١٤﴾ يَٰٓأَهْلَ ٱلْكِتَٰبِ قَدْ جَآءَكُمْ رَسُولُنَا يُبَيِّنُ لَكُمْ كَثِيرًا مِّمَّا كُنتُمْ تُخْفُونَ مِنَ ٱلْكِتَٰبِ وَيَعْفُواْ عَن كَثِيرٍ ۚ﴾

And from those who say, 'We are Christians' we took their covenant, but they forgot [and abandoned[1]] a portion of that of which they were warned. Therefore, We stirred up enmity and hatred among them until the Day of Resurrection. And Allāh is going to inform them about what they used to do. O people of the Book, there has come to you Our Messenger making clear to you much of what you used to hide of the Book and overlooking much. (al-Mā'idah: 14, 15).

According to some scholars of the Qur'ānic exegesis, the verse no 15 as quoted above indicates that the Messenger (ﷺ) uncovered what the Jews distorted, changed, misinterpreted or fabricated as a lie against Allāh, but still left much of their manipulation undisclosed, since there was no need to expose that[2].

1- Al-Sa'di, *Taysīr al-Karīm al-Raḥmān,* p. 188. (Translator)

2- Ibn Kathir, *al-Tafsīr* vol. iii, p. 63.

All the above quoted verses point to the fact that the Torah and the *Injīl* were changed and distorted; hence, Muslim scholars have unanimously agreed on this.

The Glorious Qur'ān is free from distortion & proofs of how Allāh has preserved it.

The Glorious Qur'ān is free from corruption and distortion suffered by the former Scriptures. This has been the work of Allāh who preserved and safeguarded this Qur'ān. He says accordingly,

﴿ إِنَّا نَحْنُ نَزَّلْنَا ٱلذِّكْرَ وَإِنَّا لَهُۥ لَحَٰفِظُونَ ﴾.

Truly, it is We Who sent down the Reminder [i.e. the Qur'ān] and We will surely be its Guardian. (al-Ḥijr: 9).

In his commentary on this verse, Imam al-Ṭabari, the well-known Muslim scholar, says, "Allāh said, 'We are, for the Qur'ān, Guardian; who protects it from either false addition to its content, or omission of any of its rulings, limits and obligations'[1]".

Allāh informed us elsewhere in the Qur'ān that He has perfected His Book, explained it in detail, and raised it high above any falsehood. He said,

﴿ لَّا يَأْتِيهِ ٱلْبَٰطِلُ مِنۢ بَيْنِ يَدَيْهِ وَلَا مِنْ خَلْفِهِۦ ۖ تَنزِيلٌ مِّنْ حَكِيمٍ حَمِيدٍ ﴾.

Falsehood cannot come at it, neither from before it nor from behind it; [it is] a revelation from an All-Wise, Praiseworthy [God]. (Fuṣṣilat: 42).

1- Ibn Jarīr, *al-Tafsīr* vol. xiv p. 7.

﴿ الٓر كِتَٰبٌ أُحۡكِمَتۡ ءَايَٰتُهُۥ ثُمَّ فُصِّلَتۡ مِن لَّدُنۡ حَكِيمٍ خَبِيرٍ ﴾.

Alif –Lām– Rā[1]. [This is] a Book whose verses are perfected and then presented in detail, from [One Who is] All-Wise, Well-Acquainted [with all things]. (Hūd: 1).

﴿ لَا تُحَرِّكۡ بِهِۦ لِسَانَكَ لِتَعۡجَلَ بِهِۦٓ ﴿١٦﴾ إِنَّ عَلَيۡنَا جَمۡعَهُۥ وَقُرۡءَانَهُۥ ﴾.

Do not move your tongue with it [oh Muḥammad] to hasten with it. Indeed, upon Us is its collection [in your heart] and [to make possible] its recitation. (al-Qiyāmah: 16, 17).

These verses are proofs of Allāh's perfect protection of the letter and spirit of the Qur'ān from any alteration or modification. Starting from the time it was revealed and until He will sanction its retrieval back to Him. Allāh has taken upon Himself the duty of making this Qur'ān taught to the Prophet, to make possible its collection in his heart, to explain it to him, and make it more expounded through the *Sunnah*. After this, Allāh also selected some pious and trustworthy followers for the Prophet, who learnt this Qur'ān by heart and preserved it in written form throughout all ages and generations. The Book of Allāh thus remains intact and unadulterated; adults and children read it exactly as it has been initially revealed to Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ), the variety of times and cities notwithstanding.

Muslim scholars have drawn attention to an amazing clever remark regarding why it was possible for the people of the Book to

1- These letters are part of the miracle of the Qur'ān; none but Allāh alone knows their meaning. (Translator)

distort the Torah, but such distortion with regard to the Qur'ān is inconceivable. Abu 'Amr al-Dāni narrated on behalf of Abu al-Ḥasan al-Muntāb who said, I was once sitting with Qaḍi Abu Isḥāq, Ismā'īl bin Isḥāq when someone asked him the following question: 'Why was it feasible for the people of the Torah to distort it, and wasn't for the people of the Qur'ān'? He replied, "Allāh (ﷻ) said of the people of the Torah,

﴿بِمَا ٱسْتُحْفِظُوا۟ مِن كِتَٰبِ ٱللَّهِ﴾.

...for they were entrusted with the protection of the Book of Allāh. (al- Mā'idah: 44).

Allāh made the safety of His Book their responsibility, and thus it became possible for them to tamper with it. However, concerning the Qur'ān Allāh said instead,

﴿إِنَّا نَحْنُ نَزَّلْنَا ٱلذِّكْرَ وَإِنَّا لَهُۥ لَحَٰفِظُونَ﴾.

Truly, it is We Who sent down the Reminder [i.e. the Qur'ān] and We will surely be its Guardian. (al-Ḥijr: 9).

Thus, He has removed the possibility of any distortion on the part of the nation of the Qur'ān".

Abu al-Ḥasan al-Muntāb –the narrator– added, "I then went to Abu 'Abdullah al-muḥāmili and told him what had happened, and he remarked, 'I have never heard a statement better than this'."

2.4 Believing in the Glorious Qur'ān and the characteristics of such belief

2.4.1 Definitions of the Qur'ān, *Qudsi ḥadīth* and *Nabawi ḥadīth*, as well as the dissimilarities between the three

The Glorious Qur'ān is the word of Allāh, uttered by Him originally in a manner not exactly known to us. Allāh then sent it down as a revelation to his Messenger, and the believers have accepted that as true and are certainly convinced that the Qur'ān is truly the words of Allāh, which Angel Jibrīl heard directly from Him and then brought down to the last of His Messengers, Muḥammad (ﷺ), both in letter and spirit[1]. The Qur'ān, which has been transmitted through many recurring lines of transmission, leading thereby to certainty as regards its contents, is written on pages of the *muṣḥafs*[2], and safeguarded from being corrupted or distorted[3].

The *Qudsi ḥadīth* is a *ḥadīth* narrated both in letter and spirit by the Prophet (ﷺ) from his Lord (Allāh), which has been communicated to us either via a solitary chain of transmission (*Aḥād*)

1- i.e. the utterances themselves and the meaning thereof.

2- i.e. copies of the Qur'ān.

3- *Al-Ṭaḥawiyyah*, vol i, p. 172; al-Qaṭṭān, Mannā', *Mabāḥith fi* 'Ulūm al-Qur'ān (Studies in the Sciences of the Qur'ān) p. 21; al-Qāsimi, Jamāl al-Ddin, *Qawā'id al-Taḥdīth* (Principles of *Ḥadīth* narration) p. 65.

or through recurring lines of dissemination (*Mutawātir*) less in degree than that through which the Qur'ān has been transmitted[1].

An example of the *Qudsi ḥadīth* is what Abū Dharr al-Ghifāri, a Companion of the Prophet, narrated on behalf of the Prophet (ﷺ) who had in turn reported that Allāh (ﷻ) said,

(يا عبادي، إني حرمت الظلم على نفسي وجعلته بينكم محرماً فلا تظالموا).

O my servants, I have myself refrained from doing injustice, and also proscribed that you be unjust to one another, so beware of injustice. (*Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*: 2577).

And by ***Nabawi ḥadīth*** we mean any saying, deed, silent approval or description ascribed to the Prophet (ﷺ)[2].

The difference between the three (i.e. the Qur'ān, the *Qudsi* and the *Nabawi ḥadīths*)

The Qur'ān is different from both the *Qudsi* and the *Nabawi ḥadīths* in the sense that the mere recitation of its text is an act of worship. In addition to its inimitable composition, the like of which Allāh has even challenged mankind and *jinn* to produce, if they could. Similarly no one is allowed to touch the Qur'ān if he is ritually impure[3], or to recite it if he is in a state of major impurity[4]. Substituting a meaning for the original wording of any portion of the

1- Al-Qāsimi, Jamāl al-Ddin, op. cit., p. 65.

2- Al-Qāsimi, Jamāl al-Ddīn, op. cit., pp. 61-62 ; Ibn 'Uthaimayn, *Muṣṭalaḥu al-Ḥadīth* (The *Ḥadīth* Terminologies) p. 7.

3- i.e. without ablution. (Translator)

4- i.e. after sexual intercourse. (Translator)

Qur'ān is prohibited, and it is not allowed to recite anything apart from it in ṣalāh (prayer). Anyone reciting the Qur'ān would be rewarded on the basis of one merit in return for every letter, and the merit is even tenfold.

The *Qudsi ḥadīth* on the other hand is also different from the *Nabawi ḥadīth*. The former is utterly the words of Allāh, while the latter is that of His Prophet (ﷺ) both in letter and spirit. Furthermore, the *Qudsi ḥadīth* is superior to the *Nabawī ḥadīth*, in view of the supremacy of Allāh's words over the utterances of His creatures[1].

1- Al-Qāsimi, Jamāl al-Ddin, op. cit., pp. 65-66.

Characteristics of the belief in the Qur'ān

Believing in the Books revealed by Allāh constitutes a major principle of Faith as mentioned earlier. In addition to all that has been said regarding the faith in the Books of Allāh, generally. The Glorious Qur'ān -having abrogated all the previous Scriptures and as a criterion over them, which Allāh has directed mankind and *jinn* to take as the basis for their acts of worship since the time it was revealed to our Prophet, Muḥammad (ﷺ)- has some exceptional characteristics that are necessary for the belief in it. These are as follows:

1- To believe in the universality of its mission, and in the generality of the law it has brought for the whole of humanity and *jinn*. They cannot afford to disbelieve in the Qur'ān or worship Allāh in a way other than what He has prescribed in it. Allāh (ﷻ) says,

﴿تَبَارَكَ ٱلَّذِى نَزَّلَ ٱلْفُرْقَانَ عَلَىٰ عَبْدِهِۦ لِيَكُونَ لِلْعَـٰلَمِينَ نَذِيرًا﴾.

Blessed be He [Allāh] Who sent down the Criterion [The Qur'ān] upon His servant that he may be to the worlds a warner. (al-Furqān: 1).

Allāh also informs us of a statement made by His Prophet (ﷺ) thus,

﴿وَأُوحِىَ إِلَىَّ هَـٰذَا ٱلْقُرْءَانُ لِأُنذِرَكُم بِهِۦ وَمَنۢ بَلَغَ﴾.

This Qur'ān has been revealed to me that I may therewith warn you and whomever it reaches. (al-An'ām: 19).

He also informs us about another statement pronounced by the *jinn*, who said,

﴿إِنَّا سَمِعْنَا قُرْءَانًا عَجَبًا ۝١ يَهْدِىٓ إِلَى ٱلرُّشْدِ فَـَٔامَنَّا بِهِۦ﴾.

Indeed, we have heard an amazing recitation [i.e. the Qur'ān]. It guides to the right path, and we have believed in it. (al-Jinn: 1, 2).

2- To believe that the Glorious Qur'ān has nullified all the past Scriptures. It is forbidden for the people of the Book (Jews and Christians) and others to stick to any other law or Scripture after the Qur'ān has been revealed. No religion or act of worship is valid, nor may something be declared lawful or unlawful, except in accordance with what Allāh has mentioned in this Book. Allāh (ﷻ) says,

﴿ وَمَن يَبۡتَغِ غَيۡرَ ٱلۡإِسۡلَٰمِ دِينٗا فَلَن يُقۡبَلَ مِنۡهُ ﴾.

And whoever desires other than Islam as a religion, never will it be accepted from him. (Āl-'Imrān: 85).

﴿ إِنَّآ أَنزَلۡنَآ إِلَيۡكَ ٱلۡكِتَٰبَ بِٱلۡحَقِّ لِتَحۡكُمَ بَيۡنَ ٱلنَّاسِ بِمَآ أَرَىٰكَ ٱللَّهُۚ ﴾.

And We have indeed sent down to you [Muḥammad] the Book in truth, that you may judge between people by that which Allāh has shown you. (al-Nisā': 105).

Similarly, we have mentioned earlier in the *ḥadīth* narrated by Jābir bin 'Abdullah how the Prophet (ﷺ) forbade his Companions to read Scriptures belonging to either the Jews or the Christians[1], adding that, **"By Him in whose Hand is my life, If [Prophet] Mūsa (عليه السلام) were to live today, he would have no alternative but to follow me [2]".**

3- The tolerance and simplicity of the laws of the Qur'ān, in contrast to the laws brought by the previous Scriptures, which were characterized by many burdens and stern obligations for their adherents. Allāh (ﷻ) says,

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1- That is when one reads those books and regards them, after the Qur'ān has been revealed, as sources of divine guidance or legislation. (Translator)

2- See p. 204.

﴿ ٱلَّذِينَ يَتَّبِعُونَ ٱلرَّسُولَ ٱلنَّبِيَّ ٱلْأُمِّيَّ ٱلَّذِى يَجِدُونَهُۥ مَكْتُوبًا عِندَهُمْ فِى ٱلتَّوْرَىٰةِ وَٱلْإِنجِيلِ يَأْمُرُهُم بِٱلْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَىٰهُمْ عَنِ ٱلْمُنكَرِ وَيُحِلُّ لَهُمُ ٱلطَّيِّبَٰتِ وَيُحَرِّمُ عَلَيْهِمُ ٱلْخَبَٰٓئِثَ وَيَضَعُ عَنْهُمْ إِصْرَهُمْ وَٱلْأَغْلَٰلَ ٱلَّتِى كَانَتْ عَلَيْهِمْ ﴾.

Those who follow the Messenger, the unlettered Prophet, whom they find written [i.e. mentioned] in the Torah and the *Injīl* [that are] with them. He enjoins upon them what is right and forbids them what is wrong, and makes lawful for them the good things and prohibits for them the fouls and relieves them of their burden and the shackles[1] that used to be upon them. (al-A'rāf: 157).

4- The Qur'ān is the only Scripture that Allāh has guaranteed to protect from corruption regarding either the text itself or the meaning thereof. Thus, He says,

﴿ إِنَّا نَحْنُ نَزَّلْنَا ٱلذِّكْرَ وَإِنَّا لَهُۥ لَحَٰفِظُونَ ﴾.

Truly, it is We who sent down the Reminder [i.e. the Qur'ān] and We will surely be its Guardian. (al-Ḥijr: 9).

﴿ لَّا يَأْتِيهِ ٱلْبَٰطِلُ مِنۢ بَيْنِ يَدَيْهِ وَلَا مِنْ خَلْفِهِۦ ۖ تَنزِيلٌ مِّنْ حَكِيمٍ حَمِيدٍ ﴾.

Falsehood cannot come at it, neither from before it nor from behind it; [it is] a revelation from an All-Wise, Praiseworthy [God]. (Fuṣṣilat: 42).

Furthermore, Allāh declared that He has taken upon Himself the explanation and elucidation of this Qur'ān in accordance with what He had intended and prescribed. He says,

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1- i.e. strict or stern obligations.

﴿إِنَّ عَلَيْنَا جَمْعَهُۥ وَقُرْءَانَهُۥ ۝١٧ فَإِذَا قَرَأْنَٰهُ فَٱتَّبِعْ قُرْءَانَهُۥ ۝١٨ ثُمَّ إِنَّ عَلَيْنَا بَيَانَهُۥ﴾.

Indeed, upon Us is its collection [in your heart] and [to make possible] its recitation. So when We have recited it [to you through Angel Jibrīl], then follow its recital. Then upon Us is its clarification. (al-Qiyāmah: 17-19).

The eminent Muslim scholar of *Tafsīr* (Qur'ānic exegesis), Ibn Kathīr, elucidated the meaning of the last verse we have just mentioned in the following way: "That is to say, 'After you should have recited and memorized it, We shall explain and expound it to you, and also inspire you with the meaning in line with what We had intended and ordained'."

For the sake of protecting His Book, Allāh (ﷻ) prepared some leading scholars who have played this role excellently, from the days of the Prophet (ﷺ) until the present time. Those scholars not only learnt the Qur'ān by heart but, in addition, had good understanding of its meaning, acted uprightly in line with its injunctions, and authored sizable works relating to every branch of its sciences or fields. The areas covered by their academic legacy in this respect include the following:

- Tafsīr (Qur'ānic exegesis).
- Rasm and Qirā'āt (Science of the writing and recitation of the Qur'ān).
- Muḥkam and Mutashābih (The clear and the unclear).
- ***Makki*** **and** ***Madani*** (The Makkan and the Madinan revelation).

- ***Istinbāṭ al-Aḥkām*** (The science of legal deduction in the Qur'ān).
- ***Nāsikh* and *Mansūkh*** (The theory of abrogation in the Qur'ān).
- ***Asbāb al-Nuzūl*** (Causes or occasions of revelation).
- ***Amthāl al-Qur'ān*** (The Qur'ānic proverbs).
- ***I'jāz al-Qur'ān*** (The inimitability or miraculous nature of the Qur'ān).
- ***Gharīb al-Qur'ān*** (The less-common words in the Qur'ān).
- ***I'rāb al-Qur'ān*** (Grammatical analysis of the Qur'ānic words), etc.

As a consequence of Allāh's preparation of those scholars to serve His Book and the related sciences, His protection of the Qur'ān materialized through the aforementioned fields. Hence, it remains today well protected, as it is being read and explained as exactly as it was originally revealed.

5- There are many aspects of inimitability in the Qur'ān, as in the other Books revealed by Allāh (ﷻ). On the whole, the Glorious Qur'ān represents the greatest miracle as well as the strongest and lasting evidence Allāh has used to support His Prophet (ﷺ) and his followers up till the Day of Resurrection. The two Sheikhs (Bukhāri and Muslim) reported on the authority of Abū Hurairah (رضي الله عنه) that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said,

(ما من الأنبياء نبي إلا أعطي من الآيات ما مثله آمن عليه البشـــر، وإنما كان الذي أوتيته وحياً أوحاه الله إليّ فأرجو أن أكون أكثرهم تابعاً يوم القيامة).

Every Prophet was given miracles that led people to believe in him. But what I have been given is the revelation, which Allāh revealed to me. I therefore hope that my followers would outnumber those of any other Prophet on the Day of Resurrection. (*Bukhāri*: 4981; *Muslim*: 152).

Facets of inimitability in the Qur'ān include the beauty of the compilation itself, the purity of its language and the eloquence of the method. Mankind and *jinn* were both challenged at varying degrees to produce the like of this Qur'ān or at least part of it. At the initial stage, Allāh put it to them to produce, if they could, something that would be parallel to the Qur'ān, but they totally fell short of that. Allāh (ﷻ) says,

﴿ أَمْ يَقُولُونَ تَقَوَّلَهُۥ ۚ بَل لَّا يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٣٣﴾ فَلْيَأْتُوا۟ بِحَدِيثٍ مِّثْلِهِۦٓ إِن كَانُوا۟ صَٰدِقِينَ ﴾.

Or do they say, 'He [Muḥammad] has forged it'? Nay, they do not believe. Let them produce a statement like it, if they should be truthful. (al-Ṭūr: 33, 34).

Allāh said also while reporting their inability in this regard,

﴿ قُل لَّئِنِ ٱجْتَمَعَتِ ٱلْإِنسُ وَٱلْجِنُّ عَلَىٰٓ أَن يَأْتُوا۟ بِمِثْلِ هَٰذَا ٱلْقُرْءَانِ لَا يَأْتُونَ بِمِثْلِهِۦ وَلَوْ كَانَ بَعْضُهُمْ لِبَعْضٍ ظَهِيرًا ﴾.

Say, 'If mankind and *jinn* gathered in order to produce the like of this Qur'ān, they could not produce the like thereof, even if they helped one another'. (al-Isrā': 88).

After this, Allāh called them to dare bring forth just ten similar *sūrahs* (chapters), but they also failed to do so. Allāh states,

﴿أَمۡ يَقُولُونَ ٱفۡتَرَىٰهُۖ قُلۡ فَأۡتُواْ بِعَشۡرِ سُوَرٖ مِّثۡلِهِۦ مُفۡتَرَيَٰتٖ وَٱدۡعُواْ مَنِ ٱسۡتَطَعۡتُم مِّن دُونِ ٱللَّهِ إِن كُنتُمۡ صَٰدِقِينَ﴾.

Or do they say, 'He invented it?' Say, 'Then bring you ten *sūrahs* like it that have been invented, and call [to your aid] whomever you can besides Allāh, if you should be truthful'. (Hūd: 13).

Then in the third time, Allāh challenged them to produce just one *sūrah*, but, as usual, they lacked the ability for this as well. Allāh (ﷻ) says,

﴿أَمۡ يَقُولُونَ ٱفۡتَرَىٰهُۖ قُلۡ فَأۡتُواْ بِسُورَةٖ مِّثۡلِهِۦ وَٱدۡعُواْ مَنِ ٱسۡتَطَعۡتُم مِّن دُونِ ٱللَّهِ إِن كُنتُمۡ صَٰدِقِينَ﴾.

Or do they say, 'He invented it?' Say, 'Bring you then a *sūrah* [forged] like it, and call upon [for help] whomever you can besides Allāh, if you should be truthful'. (Yūnus: 38).

In no other stronger term could the inimitability of the Qur'ān have been established; having mentioned the incapability of the entire creation to withstand the least degree of Allāh's challenge in this regard, and that is to simply produce nothing more than just a *sūrah* like unto the Qur'ān! Knowing that a *sūrah* of this nature may consist of just three verses; an equivalent of the shortest of the *sūrahs* of the Glorious Qur'ān.

6- Allāh (ﷻ) has explained in the Qur'ān all what humanity stands in need of, pertaining to either the worldly life or the life after death. Thus, He declared,

﴿وَنَزَّلۡنَا عَلَيۡكَ ٱلۡكِتَٰبَ تِبۡيَٰنٗا لِّكُلِّ شَيۡءٖ وَهُدٗى وَرَحۡمَةٗ وَبُشۡرَىٰ لِلۡمُسۡلِمِينَ﴾.

And We have sent down upon you the Book as clarification for all things, and as guidance, mercy and glad tidings for the Muslims. (al-Naḥl: 89).

﴿ مَّا فَرَّطْنَا فِي ٱلْكِتَٰبِ مِن شَيْءٍ ﴾.

Nothing have We neglected in the Book[1].(al-An'ām: 38).

In the words of Ibn Masūd (ﷺ), "Every knowledge has been revealed in this Qur'ān; all things have been clarified for us in the Qur'ān".

7- Allāh (ﷻ) has made the Qur'ān easy for remembrance and cogitation, as one of the most important features of this Book. He says,

﴿ وَلَقَدْ يَسَّرْنَا ٱلْقُرْءَانَ لِلذِّكْرِ فَهَلْ مِن مُّدَّكِرٍ ﴾.

And We have indeed made the Qur'ān easy for remembrance, so is there any who will remember [or receive admonition]? (al-Qamar: 17).

﴿ كِتَٰبٌ أَنزَلْنَٰهُ إِلَيْكَ مُبَٰرَكٌ لِّيَدَّبَّرُوٓاْ ءَايَٰتِهِۦ وَلِيَتَذَكَّرَ أُوْلُواْ ٱلْأَلْبَٰبِ ﴾.

[This is] a Book full of blessings, which We have sent down to you, that they might ponder over its āyahs and that people of understanding would be reminded. (Ṣād: 29).

Commenting on the above quoted verse (al-Qamar: 17), the famous Muslim scholar, Mujāhid said, "That is: We facilitated its recitation". Another Muslim scholar called al-Suddi gave the meaning as, "We made it easy for the [people's] tongues to recite it". Ibn 'Abbās (رضي الله عنهما) also said, "Had it not been that Allāh has facilitated its recitation for men, no created being would have been able to pronounce the words of Allāh[2]".

1- The 'Book' here may also mean the Preserved Tablet (*al-Lawḥ al-Maḥfūẓ*) *according* to some *Tafsīr* scholars. (Translator)

2- *Ibn Kathīr, Tafsīr* vol. viii, p. 453.

According to Ṭabari and some other leading scholars of the Qur'ānic exegesis, the statement 'Qur'ān made easy' embodies facilitation of the word being recited. It also includes facilitation of the meaning, thereby paving the way for an easy reflection, meditation and learning lessons from the Qur'ān. This, itself, is apparent and noticeable enough in reality.

8- The Glorious Qur'ān contains the gist of the teachings of all the past Scriptures, and the basic elements of the laws of all Messengers. Allāh (ﷻ) says,

﴿وَأَنزَلۡنَآ إِلَيۡكَ ٱلۡكِتَٰبَ بِٱلۡحَقِّ مُصَدِّقٗا لِّمَا بَيۡنَ يَدَيۡهِ مِنَ ٱلۡكِتَٰبِ وَمُهَيۡمِنًا عَلَيۡهِۖ﴾.

And We have sent down to you [Muḥammad] the Book in truth, confirming that which preceded it of the Scripture and as a Watcher over it. (al-Mā'idah: 48).

﴿شَرَعَ لَكُم مِّنَ ٱلدِّينِ مَا وَصَّىٰ بِهِۦ نُوحٗا وَٱلَّذِيٓ أَوۡحَيۡنَآ إِلَيۡكَ وَمَا وَصَّيۡنَا بِهِۦٓ إِبۡرَٰهِيمَ وَمُوسَىٰ وَعِيسَىٰٓۖ أَنۡ أَقِيمُواْ ٱلدِّينَ وَلَا تَتَفَرَّقُواْ فِيهِۚ﴾.

He [Allāh] has ordained for you of religion what He enjoined upon Nūḥ, and that which We have revealed to you [Muḥammad], and what We enjoined upon Ibrāhīm [Abraham], Mūsa [Moses[and 'Īsa [Jesus] – to establish the religion and not be divided therein. (al-Shūrā: 13).

9- The Qur'ān contains detailed information about the past Messengers and nations in an unprecedented magnitude. Allāh (ﷻ) says,

﴿وَكُلّٗا نَّقُصُّ عَلَيۡكَ مِنۡ أَنۢبَآءِ ٱلرُّسُلِ مَا نُثَبِّتُ بِهِۦ فُؤَادَكَۚ﴾.

And each [story] We relate to you from the news of the [past] Messengers is that by which We make firm your heart. (Hūd: 120).

﴿ ذَٰلِكَ مِنْ أَنبَاءِ الْقُرَىٰ نَقُصُّهُ عَلَيْكَ ۖ مِنْهَا قَائِمٌ وَحَصِيدٌ ﴾.

That is from the news of the cities, which We relate to you; of them some are [still] standing and some are [as] a harvest [mowed down]. (Hūd: 100).

﴿ كَذَٰلِكَ نَقُصُّ عَلَيْكَ مِنْ أَنبَاءِ مَا قَدْ سَبَقَ ۚ وَقَدْ آتَيْنَاكَ مِن لَّدُنَّا ذِكْرًا ﴾.

Thus, We relate to you [Muḥammad] from the news of what has preceded. And indeed We have given you from Us a reminder [i.e. the Qur'ān]. (Ṭā-Hā: 99).

10- Of all the divine Books, the Glorious Qur'ān was the last to be revealed, the ultimate and the witness over all the previous Books. Allāh (ﷻ) says,

﴿ نَزَّلَ عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ مُصَدِّقًا لِّمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ وَأَنزَلَ التَّوْرَاةَ وَالْإِنجِيلَ ۝٣ مِن قَبْلُ هُدًى لِّلنَّاسِ وَأَنزَلَ الْفُرْقَانَ ﴾.

He [Allāh] has revealed to you [Muḥammad] the Book in truth, confirming that which was [revealed] before it, and He revealed the Torah and the *Injīl.* Before, as guidance for mankind, and He sent down the Criterion [i.e. the Qur'ān]. (Āl- 'Imrān:3, 4).

﴿ وَأَنزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ مُصَدِّقًا لِّمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ وَمُهَيْمِنًا عَلَيْهِ ﴾.

And We have sent down to you [Muḥammad] the Book in truth, confirming that which preceded it of the Scripture and as a Watcher over it. (al-Mā'idah: 48).

The aforementioned are some of the characteristics of the Glorious Qur'ān, which distinguish it from other Scriptures. One's faith in the Qur'ān remains invalid until he/she believes in all of these points, both in theory and in practice. Allāh, the Sublime, knows best.

Chapter Three: Believing in the Messengers of Allāh

This chapter consists of eleven items as follows:

i) The rule concerning the belief in Allāh's Messengers and the proofs thereof.

ii) Definition of the terms: 'prophet' and 'messenger', with special reference to the difference between the two.

iii) The method of believing in Allāh's Messengers.

iv) Our duty towards them.

v) Messengers described by Allāh as Men of Firm Resolution (*'Ulu al-'Azm*).

vi) The special qualities of our Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ) and the rights owed him by his followers. Also to be discussed here is the veracity of seeing him in a dream.

vii) His message as the final of all divine missions; hence, no Prophet shall come after him.

viii) The Night Journey (*Al-Isrā'*) by the Prophet (ﷺ): Facts and proofs.

ix) The truth about the life of the Prophets (after their death).

x) The Prophets' miracles compared to the *karamah* (charisma) of the righteous believers.

xi) *Al-Waliyy* and *al-Wilāyah* from an Islamic viewpoint.

3.1 The rule concerning the belief in Allāh's Messengers and the proofs thereof

To believe in the Messengers of Allāh is a religious obligation and a major article of the Muslim Faith. Much evidence on this could be found in the Glorious Qur'ān as well as the *Sunnah* of the Prophet (ﷺ). Allāh (ﷻ) says,

﴿ ءَامَنَ ٱلرَّسُولُ بِمَآ أُنزِلَ إِلَيۡهِ مِن رَّبِّهِۦ وَٱلۡمُؤۡمِنُونَۚ كُلٌّ ءَامَنَ بِٱللَّهِ وَمَلَٰٓئِكَتِهِۦ وَكُتُبِهِۦ وَرُسُلِهِۦ لَا نُفَرِّقُ بَيۡنَ أَحَدٖ مِّن رُّسُلِهِۦۚ وَقَالُواْ سَمِعۡنَا وَأَطَعۡنَاۖ ﴾.

The Messenger has believed in what was revealed to him from his Lord, and [so have] the believers. Each of them has believed in Allāh, His angels, His Books and His Messengers [saying], 'We make no distinction between any of His Messengers'. And they said, 'We heard and we obeyed'... (al-Baqarah: 285).

Thus, Allāh mentioned the belief in His Messengers as one of those articles of faith in which the Prophet and the believers alike have believed. He further described their faith in those Messengers as an indivisible entity; having believed in all of them without any exception.

Stating further, the rule concerning whoever renounces the belief in His Messengers, Allāh (ﷻ) said,

﴿ إِنَّ ٱلَّذِينَ يَكۡفُرُونَ بِٱللَّهِ وَرُسُلِهِۦ وَيُرِيدُونَ أَن يُفَرِّقُواْ بَيۡنَ ٱللَّهِ وَرُسُلِهِۦ وَيَقُولُونَ نُؤۡمِنُ بِبَعۡضٖ وَنَكۡفُرُ بِبَعۡضٖ وَيُرِيدُونَ أَن يَتَّخِذُواْ بَيۡنَ ذَٰلِكَ سَبِيلًا ﴿١٥٠﴾ أُوْلَٰٓئِكَ هُمُ ٱلۡكَٰفِرُونَ حَقّٗاۚ ﴾.

Indeed, those who disbelieve in Allāh and His Messengers and wish to separate between [the belief in] Allāh and [the belief in] His Messengers and say, 'We believe in some, but reject others',

and wish to take a course midway. They are, truly, the unbelievers... (al-Nisā': 150, 151).

Here, Allāh declared as infidels whoever disbelieves in the Messengers or discriminates between them, through believing in some and disbelieving in others. He went further to describe them as 'the real unbelievers'; an indication that their infidelity is both certain and unequivocal.

Conversely, Allāh (ﷻ) explained, in the same context, the stand of the faithful in this respect by saying,

﴿ وَٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا۟ بِٱللَّهِ وَرُسُلِهِۦ وَلَمْ يُفَرِّقُوا۟ بَيْنَ أَحَدٍ مِّنْهُمْ أُو۟لَـٰٓئِكَ سَوْفَ يُؤْتِيهِمْ أُجُورَهُمْ ۗ وَكَانَ ٱللَّهُ غَفُورًا رَّحِيمًا ﴾.

But they who believe in Allāh and His Messengers and make no discrimination between any of them, to those He is going to give their rewards. And Allāh is Ever Forgiving, Most Merciful. (al-Nisā': 152).

Allāh described them as believers in Him and in all of His Messengers without prejudicing against any of them, by believing in some and disbelieving in others.

The *Sunnah* also testifies to what has been stated in the Qur'ān that believing in the Messengers of Allāh constitutes an article of Faith. This is evident in the *ḥadīth* of Jibrīl as quoted earlier in this book[1]. In his response to Angel Jibrīl's question about Faith, Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said, "[Faith means] that you believe in Allāh, His

1- Cf. Chapter One: The Belief in Angels.

angels, His Books, His Messengers, the Last Day[1]....". Thus, believing in Allāh's Messengers has been mentioned concurrently with the other articles of Faith in which every Muslim must believe.

The Prophet (ﷺ) was also reported to have a special supplication, which he would recite each time he prayed the non obligatory prayer of the night. The supplication reads as follows:

(اللهم لك الحمد أنت نور السماوات والأرض، ولك الحمد أنت قيم السماوات والأرض، ولك الحمد أنت رب السماوات والأرض ومن فيهن، أنت الحق، ووعدك الحق، وقولك الحق، ولقاؤك الحق، والجنة حق، والنار حق، والنبيون حق، والساعة حق...).

O Allāh! Praise be to You, You are the Light of the heavens and the earth. Praise be to You, You are the Keeper of the heavens and the earth. Praise be to You, You are the Lord of the heavens, the earth and whoever is therein. You are the Truth; Your Promise is the truth; Your Word is the truth and meeting You [on the Day of Resurrection] is the truth. Paradise is true, and so too is the Fire (Hell). The Prophets are also true, and the Hour [Resurrection] is likewise true... (*Saḥīḥ Bukhāri*: 7499).

The Prophet (ﷺ) thus testified to the truthfulness of all the Prophets of Allāh alongside other great fundamentals of Faith mentioned in the *ḥadīth*, such as the belief in Allāh and in the existence of both Paradise and Hell, as well as in the coming of the Hour of Resurrection. Furthermore, this testimony immediately preceded the supplication and the night prayer he used to offer. These factors –combined together–

1- See p. 155.

signify the importance of believing in Allāh's Messengers and Prophets, as far as the religion of Islam is concerned.

It is therefore an established fact that people are duty-bound to believe in the Messengers, and take that as one of the strongest pillars of Islam and a significant quality for the faithful. It is similarly incontestable that whoever disbelieves in all or any of Allāh's Messengers has become downright disbeliever, even in Allāh Himself, for having rejected such an important principle of Faith: the belief in the Messengers.

Benefits of believing in the Messengers

Believing in Allāh's Messengers provides the believer with many good impacts and great benefits. These include:

1- Acknowledging Allāh's mercy and concern for His creation, as He has sent to them those honourable Messengers to guide and lead them aright.

2- Giving thanks to Him for this immense favour.

3- Loving the Messengers themselves and giving them due respect. Moreover, the believer will praise them in a befitting manner, for they are the Messengers of Allāh (ﷻ) and the cream of His servants, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, for their role in conveying Allāh's message to His creation, offering valuable advice to their adherents, and putting up with the mischief of those followers.

3.2 Definitions of *nabiyy* 'prophet' and *rasūl* 'messenger', and the difference between the two terms

Linguistically, the word '*nabiyy*' is a derivative of another word: '*naba'*', which means an immensely useful news or information. A saying of Allāh (ﷻ) goes thus:

﴿عَمَّ يَتَسَاءَلُونَ ۝١ عَنِ النَّبَإِ الْعَظِيمِ﴾.

About what are they asking one another? About the great news. (al-Naba': 1, 2).

Hence, a Prophet is called '*nabiyy*', for he receives message from Allāh and disseminates the same to others. In other words, he is at both ends: the receiving and the dispatching.

Another view suggests that the word '*nabiyy*' perhaps has its origin in the word '*nabāwah*', meaning an elevated object. Having this in mind, it is then opined that the Prophets have been given this title '*Nabiyy*' in recognition of their high ranking status above all other human beings. Allāh (ﷻ) says,

﴿وَرَفَعْنَاهُ مَكَانًا عَلِيًّا﴾.

And We raised him [Idrīs (Enoch)] to a lofty station. (Maryam: 57).

As for the word 'rasūl', it is also derived from another word '*irsāl*' meaning 'to send something'. Allāh (ﷻ) has informed us in the Qur'ān of that statement ascribed to the historical *Saba'* Queen,

﴿وَإِنِّي مُرْسِلَةٌ إِلَيْهِم بِهَدِيَّةٍ فَنَاظِرَةٌ بِمَ يَرْجِعُ الْمُرْسَلُونَ﴾.

But indeed, I am going to send them a present, and wait to see with what [reply] will the emissaries return. (al-Naml: 35).

Now we come to the Islamic technical meaning of both terms. Muslim scholars have expressed here different views, but the most acceptable definition is as follows:

A '*nabiyy*' (Prophet) is he whom Allāh has given, through revelation, the law which he himself shall follow, and by which he shall also command the believers to abide. A '*rasul*' (Messenger) however, is he whom Allāh has revealed to, ordering him to convey His message to those who defy His orders.

The dissimilarity between both terms lies in the fact that a 'prophet' even though is informed of Allāh's commands and prohibitions so that he may pass the same to fellow believers, his mission is nevertheless restricted to that circle, and may not be extended to cover the unbelievers. As for a 'messenger', he is sent to both the believing and the disbelieving nations; to convey Allāh's message to them and invite them to His worship.

A 'Messenger' does not necessarily bring about new law. Hence, Yūsuf (Joseph), although a Messenger, followed the religion of Ibrāhīm, (another Messenger who had come before him). Likewise, Dāwūd and Sulaimān have both stuck to the law of the Torah, even though, they were, like Mūsa (the initial recipient of the Torah), Messengers of Almighty Allāh. Allāh (ﷻ) says,

﴿وَلَقَدْ جَآءَكُمْ يُوسُفُ مِن قَبْلُ بِٱلْبَيِّنَٰتِ فَمَا زِلْتُمْ فِى شَكٍّ مِّمَّا جَآءَكُم بِهِۦ حَتَّىٰٓ إِذَا هَلَكَ قُلْتُمْ لَن يَبْعَثَ ٱللَّهُ مِنۢ بَعْدِهِۦ رَسُولًا﴾

And Yūsuf had already come to you before with clear proofs, but you remained in doubt of that which he brought to you, until when he died, you said, 'Never will Allāh send a Messenger after him'. (Ghāfir: 34).

﴿إِنَّآ أَوْحَيْنَآ إِلَيْكَ كَمَآ أَوْحَيْنَآ إِلَىٰ نُوحٍ وَٱلنَّبِيِّـۧنَ مِنۢ بَعْدِهِۦ ۚ وَأَوْحَيْنَآ إِلَىٰٓ إِبْرَٰهِيمَ وَإِسْمَٰعِيلَ وَإِسْحَٰقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ وَٱلْأَسْبَاطِ وَعِيسَىٰ وَأَيُّوبَ وَيُونُسَ وَهَٰرُونَ وَسُلَيْمَٰنَ ۚ وَءَاتَيْنَا دَاوُۥدَ زَبُورًا ﴿١٦٣﴾ وَرُسُلًا قَدْ قَصَصْنَٰهُمْ عَلَيْكَ مِن قَبْلُ وَرُسُلًا لَّمْ نَقْصُصْهُمْ عَلَيْكَ ۚ وَكَلَّمَ ٱللَّهُ مُوسَىٰ تَكْلِيمًا﴾.

We have indeed sent revelation to you [Muḥammad] as We sent to Nūḥ and the Prophets after him. And We [also] sent revelation to Ibrāhīm, Ismā'īl, Isḥāq, Ya'qūb, the Descendants[1], 'Īsā, Ayyūb, Yūnus, Hārūn and Sulaimān. And to Dawūd We gave the *Zabūr*. And Messengers We have already related to you their stories, and others about whom We have not related to you. And to Mūsā Allāh spoke direct. (al-Nisā': 163, 164).

A Prophet, in some cases, may also be called 'messenger'. Thus, we read in a saying of Allāh (ﷻ) that,

﴿وَمَآ أَرْسَلْنَا مِن قَبْلِكَ مِن رَّسُولٍ وَلَا نَبِيٍّ إِلَّآ إِذَا تَمَنَّىٰٓ أَلْقَى ٱلشَّيْطَٰنُ فِىٓ أُمْنِيَّتِهِۦ﴾.

And We did not send before you any Messenger or Prophet except that when he recited the revelation [or spoke] the Devil threw into it [some falsehood]. (al-Ḥajj: 52).

Here, Allāh (ﷻ) stated that both are sent by Him to convey His message; whether a Prophet or a Messenger. This implies that any Prophet -whom Allāh has ordered to invite his fellow believers to certain act- is regarded as having been sent to them with a message from Him, even though his mission is not unlimited. As for a Messenger '*rasūl*', whose mission is unrestricted, he is sent to the entire creation, the faithful and the infidels alike.

1- i.e. the offspring of Prophet Ya'qūb's sons.

3.3 The method of believing in Allāh's Messengers

Believing in Allāh's Messengers means to accept as true whatever Allāh or His Prophet (ﷺ) has said concerning them, both generally and minutely.

The general acceptance or belief in this regard signifies being resolutely convinced that Allāh (ﷻ) has raised for every nation a Messenger who invited them to worship Allāh alone without ascribing partners to Him, and to disbelieve in any other deity being worshipped besides Him. Allāh (ﷻ) says,

﴿ وَلَقَدْ بَعَثْنَا فِي كُلِّ أُمَّةٍ رَّسُولًا أَنِ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ وَاجْتَنِبُوا الطَّاغُوتَ ﴾.

And indeed, We have sent among every nation a Messenger, [proclaiming] Worship Allāh [alone] and avoid false objects of worship *(ṭāghūt)*. (al-Naḥl: 36).

One should also believe that the Messengers were all truthful, righteous, prudent, honourable, pious and trustworthy. And that they themselves have been rightly guided, while they also led others to the right path. Allāh (ﷻ) says,

﴿ هَٰذَا مَا وَعَدَ الرَّحْمَٰنُ وَصَدَقَ الْمُرْسَلُونَ ﴾.

This is what the Most Merciful (Allāh) had promised, and true were the words of the Messengers. (Yā-Sīn: 52).

He said again, after mentioning many of those Prophets and Messengers,

﴿ وَمِنْ آبَائِهِمْ وَذُرِّيَّاتِهِمْ وَإِخْوَانِهِمْ ۖ وَاجْتَبَيْنَاهُمْ وَهَدَيْنَاهُمْ إِلَىٰ صِرَاطٍ مُّسْتَقِيمٍ (٨٧) ذَٰلِكَ هُدَى اللَّهِ يَهْدِي بِهِ مَن يَشَاءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ ﴾.

And [some] among their fathers and their descendants and their brothers. And We chose them and guided them to a straight path.

That is the guidance of Allāh, by which He guides whomever He wills of His servants. (al-An'ām: 87, 88).

It must be held also, that whatever they preached or practised is the plain truth and the manifest guidance. They have come with clear signs from their Lord to their people. In this regard, Allāh (ﷻ) relates what the dwellers of Paradise will say in the life to come as follows:

﴿لَقَدْ جَآءَتْ رُسُلُ رَبِّنَا بِٱلْحَقِّ﴾.

Certainly, the Messengers of our Lord had come with the truth. (al-A'rāf: 43).

Allāh says again in another verse,

﴿لَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا رُسُلَنَا بِٱلْبَيِّنَٰتِ وَأَنزَلْنَا مَعَهُمُ ٱلْكِتَٰبَ وَٱلْمِيزَانَ لِيَقُومَ ٱلنَّاسُ بِٱلْقِسْطِ﴾.

We have indeed sent our Messengers with clear evidences and sent down with them the Book and the balance [Justice], that mankind may keep up justice. (al-Ḥadīd: 25).

We should also see their mission as having one single origin, which is the call to the oneness of Allāh. However, details of the laws revealed to each one of them are not identical. Allāh (ﷻ) has said,

﴿وَمَآ أَرْسَلْنَا مِن قَبْلِكَ مِن رَّسُولٍ إِلَّا نُوحِىٓ إِلَيْهِ أَنَّهُۥ لَآ إِلَٰهَ إِلَّآ أَنَا۠ فَٱعْبُدُونِ﴾.

And We sent not before you any Messenger except that We revealed to him that, 'None has the right to be worshipped but Me [Allāh], so worship Me [alone]'. (al-Anbiyā': 25).

﴿لِكُلٍّ جَعَلْنَا مِنكُمْ شِرْعَةً وَمِنْهَاجًا﴾.

We prescribed to each of you a law and a clear way. (al-Mā'idah: 48).

Equally, we must hold that the Messengers have conveyed very clearly the message they were sent with, leaving no excuse thereby for the creation. Allāh (ﷻ) says,

﴿ لِّيَعْلَمَ أَن قَدْ أَبْلَغُوا۟ رِسَٰلَٰتِ رَبِّهِمْ وَأَحَاطَ بِمَا لَدَيْهِمْ وَأَحْصَىٰ كُلَّ شَىْءٍ عَدَدًۢا ﴾.

Till He [Allāh] sees[1] **that they [the Messengers] have conveyed the Messages of their Lord. And He has encompassed all that is with them, and kept count of all things.** (al-Jinn: 28).

﴿ رُّسُلًا مُّبَشِّرِينَ وَمُنذِرِينَ لِئَلَّا يَكُونَ لِلنَّاسِ عَلَى ٱللَّهِ حُجَّةٌۢ بَعْدَ ٱلرُّسُلِ ﴾.

Messengers as bearers of good news and warners, so that mankind will have no plea against Allāh after [the coming of] the Messengers. (al-Nisā': 165).

It is also necessary to believe that the Messengers are part of Allāh's creation, and posses nothing of the Lordship's characteristics. Rather, they are only servants of Allāh (ﷻ), whom He honoured with His revelation. Allāh (ﷻ) says,

﴿ قَالَتْ لَهُمْ رُسُلُهُمْ إِن نَّحْنُ إِلَّا بَشَرٌ مِّثْلُكُمْ وَلَٰكِنَّ ٱللَّهَ يَمُنُّ عَلَىٰ مَن يَشَآءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِۦ ﴾.

Their Messengers said to them, 'We are only human beings like you, but Allāh confers favour upon whom He wills of His servants'. (Ibrāhīm : 11).

Allāh also related a saying of His Prophet, Nūḥ (عليه السلام) thus,

﴿ وَلَآ أَقُولُ لَكُمْ عِندِى خَزَآئِنُ ٱللَّهِ وَلَآ أَعْلَمُ ٱلْغَيْبَ وَلَآ أَقُولُ إِنِّى مَلَكٌ ﴾.

And I do not tell you that I have the treasures of Allāh, neither do I know the unseen, nor do I claim to be an angel. (Hūd: 31).

1- This may also read, "That he [Muḥammad] may know…", cf. Tafsīrs of both Ibn Jarir and Ibn al-Jawzi –*Zād al-Masīr*– . (Translator)

While He similarly commanded our Prophet, Muḥammad (ﷺ), to declare the same to his people,

﴿ قُل لَّآ أَقُولُ لَكُمْ عِندِى خَزَآئِنُ ٱللَّهِ وَلَآ أَعْلَمُ ٱلْغَيْبَ وَلَآ أَقُولُ لَكُمْ إِنِّى مَلَكٌ ۖ إِنْ أَتَّبِعُ إِلَّا مَا يُوحَىٰٓ إِلَىَّ ﴾.

Say, 'I do not tell you that I have the treasures of Allāh or that I know the unseen, nor do I tell you that I am an angel. I only follow what is revealed to me'. (al-An'ām: 50).

Also important in this regard is to believe that Allāh helps and supports His Messengers, and that they and their followers will always be victorious in the end. Allāh (ﷻ) has said,

﴿ إِنَّا لَنَنصُرُ رُسُلَنَا وَٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا۟ فِى ٱلْحَيَوٰةِ ٱلدُّنْيَا وَيَوْمَ يَقُومُ ٱلْأَشْهَـٰدُ ﴾.

Indeed, We will support our Messengers and those who believe during the life of this world and on the Day when the witnesses will stand forth. (Ghāfir: 51).

Equally, we must believe that some of the Messengers are superior to others; they are not all on the same footing. Allāh (ﷻ) says,

﴿ تِلْكَ ٱلرُّسُلُ فَضَّلْنَا بَعْضَهُمْ عَلَىٰ بَعْضٍ ۘ مِّنْهُم مَّن كَلَّمَ ٱللَّهُ ﴾.

Those Messengers – some of them We caused to exceed others. Among them were those to whom Allāh spoke. (al-Baqarah: 253).

We must believe generally in all what has been mentioned above, as well as in any other related issues as stated in both the Qur'ān and the *Sunnah* concerning the Messengers of Allāh.

Believing in Allāh's Messengers in detail however, has to do only with those Messengers who have been mentioned expressly

either in the Glorious Qur'ān or in the *Sunnah*. One should believe minutely in whatever is contained in the religious texts regarding their names, stories, merits and attributes.

Some twenty five Prophets or Messengers in all have been mentioned in the Qur'ān, eighteen of them in the following consecutive verses alone:

﴿ وَتِلْكَ حُجَّتُنَآ ءَاتَيْنَٰهَآ إِبْرَٰهِيمَ عَلَىٰ قَوْمِهِۦ ۚ نَرْفَعُ دَرَجَٰتٍ مَّن نَّشَآءُ ۗ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ حَكِيمٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٨٣﴾ وَوَهَبْنَا لَهُۥٓ إِسْحَٰقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ ۚ كُلًّا هَدَيْنَا ۚ وَنُوحًا هَدَيْنَا مِن قَبْلُ ۖ وَمِن ذُرِّيَّتِهِۦ دَاوُۥدَ وَسُلَيْمَٰنَ وَأَيُّوبَ وَيُوسُفَ وَمُوسَىٰ وَهَٰرُونَ ۚ وَكَذَٰلِكَ نَجْزِى ٱلْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿٨٤﴾ وَزَكَرِيَّا وَيَحْيَىٰ وَعِيسَىٰ وَإِلْيَاسَ ۖ كُلٌّ مِّنَ ٱلصَّٰلِحِينَ ﴿٨٥﴾ وَإِسْمَٰعِيلَ وَٱلْيَسَعَ وَيُونُسَ وَلُوطًا ۚ وَكُلًّا فَضَّلْنَا عَلَى ٱلْعَٰلَمِينَ ﴾.

And that was Our [conclusive] argument which We gave Ibrāhīm against his people. We raise in degrees whom We will. Certainly, your Lord is All-Wise, All-Knowing. And We gave him [i.e. Ibrāhīm] Isḥāq and Ya'qūb, each of them We guided. And Nūḥ, We guided before; and among his descendants, Dawūd, Sulaimān, Ayyūb, Yūsuf, Mūsā and Hārūn. Thus do We reward those who do good. And Zakariyyā and Yaḥyā and 'Īsa and Ilyās –all were of the righteous. And Ismā'īl and al-Yasa'and Yūnus and Lūṭ– and all We preferred over the worlds. (al-An'ām: 83-86).

The names of the rest of them occur in different verses as we shall mention bellow:

﴿ وَإِلَىٰ عَادٍ أَخَاهُمْ هُودًا ﴾.

And to 'Ād [We sent] their brother, Hūd. (al-A'rāf: 65).

﴿وَإِلَىٰ ثَمُودَ أَخَاهُمْ صَٰلِحًا﴾.

And to Thamūd [We sent] their brother, Ṣāliḥ. (al-A'rāf: 73).

﴿وَإِلَىٰ مَدْيَنَ أَخَاهُمْ شُعَيْبًا﴾.

And to [the people of] Madyan [We sent] their brother, Shu'ayb. (al-A'rāf: 85).

﴿إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ ٱصْطَفَىٰٓ ءَادَمَ وَنُوحًا﴾.

Indeed, Allāh chose Ādam and Nūḥ… (Āl-'Imrān: 33).

﴿وَإِسْمَٰعِيلَ وَإِدْرِيسَ وَذَا ٱلْكِفْلِ كُلٌّ مِّنَ ٱلصَّٰبِرِينَ﴾.

And [remember] Ismā'īl, Idrīs, and Dhul-Kifl; all were of the patient. (al-Anbiyā': 85).

﴿مُّحَمَّدٌ رَّسُولُ ٱللَّهِ وَٱلَّذِينَ مَعَهُۥٓ أَشِدَّآءُ عَلَى ٱلْكُفَّارِ رُحَمَآءُ بَيْنَهُمْ﴾.

Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allāh; and those with him are forceful against the disbelievers [but] merciful among themselves. (al-Fatḥ: 29).

Our faith regarding the aforementioned Prophets and Messengers should therefore be in detail. We should also acknowledge that each one of them was either a Prophet or a Messenger sent by Allāh, in accordance with whatever Allāh or His Messenger (Muḥammad ﷺ) has said concerning them.

Moreover, all that has been recorded in Islamic texts regarding their virtues, characteristics and stories must be accepted as true. This applies, for instance, to the case of Prophets Ibrāhīm and Muḥammad –May Allāh's peace and mercy be upon them– whom Allāh has taken as close friends. Allāh (ﷻ) says,

﴿وَٱتَّخَذَ ٱللَّهُ إِبْرَٰهِيمَ خَلِيلًا﴾.

And Allāh did take Ibrāhīm as an intimate friend. (al-Nisā': 125).

The Prophet (ﷺ) also said,

(إن الله اتخذني خليلاً كما اتخذ إبراهيم خليلاً).

Indeed, Allāh took me as an intimate friend, just as He had taken Ibrāhīm before. (*Muslim*: 532).

And to that of Mūsā (عليه السلام) with whom Allāh had direct talk. A Qur'ānic verse reads as follows:

﴿وَكَلَّمَ ٱللَّهُ مُوسَىٰ تَكْلِيمًا﴾.

And to Mūsā Allāh spoke directly. (al-Nisā': 164).

Other examples in this connection include Prophet Dawūd (عليه السلام), for whom Allāh subdued the mountains and the birds, as they glorified Allāh along with him. Allāh (ﷻ) says,

﴿وَسَخَّرْنَا مَعَ دَاوُۥدَ ٱلْجِبَالَ يُسَبِّحْنَ وَٱلطَّيْرَ ۚ وَكُنَّا فَٰعِلِينَ﴾.

And We subdued the mountains and the birds to exalt [Us], along with Dawūd. And We were doing [that]. (al-Anbiyā': 79).

Allāh also softened iron for him. Thus, He says,

﴿وَلَقَدْ ءَاتَيْنَا دَاوُۥدَ مِنَّا فَضْلًا ۖ يَٰجِبَالُ أَوِّبِى مَعَهُۥ وَٱلطَّيْرَ ۖ وَأَلَنَّا لَهُ ٱلْحَدِيدَ﴾.

And assuredly, We bestowed grace on Dawūd from Us. [We said], 'O mountains and birds, glorify [Allāh] repeatedly with him.' And We made iron pliable for him. (Saba': 10).

Similarly, Allāh subjected the wind to the orders of Sulaimān, just as He subdued for him *jinn* who worked in front of him according to his wish. Allāh (ﷻ) says,

﴿وَلِسُلَيْمَٰنَ ٱلرِّيحَ غُدُوُّهَا شَهْرٌ وَرَوَاحُهَا شَهْرٌ ۖ وَأَسَلْنَا لَهُۥ عَيْنَ ٱلْقِطْرِ ۖ وَمِنَ ٱلْجِنِّ مَن يَعْمَلُ بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ بِإِذْنِ رَبِّهِۦ﴾.

And to Sulimān We [made obedient] the wind – its morning [stride] was a month's [jouney] and its afternoon [stride] was a month's [journey][1]. And We caused a fount of [molten] brass to gush forth for him, and there were among the *jinn* who worked in front of him, by the Permission of his Lord. (Saba': 12).

Allāh also taught Sulaimān the language of birds. He says,

﴿وَوَرِثَ سُلَيْمَٰنُ دَاوُۥدَ ۖ وَقَالَ يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلنَّاسُ عُلِّمْنَا مَنطِقَ ٱلطَّيْرِ وَأُوتِينَا مِن كُلِّ شَىْءٍ﴾.

And Sulaimān inherited [the knowledge and Prophet hood of his father,] Dawūd. He said, 'O people, we have been taught the speech of birds, and on us have been bestowed all things[2]. (al-Naml: 16).

We should also believe in all what Allāh has narrated in His Book of the stories of His Messengers with their nations. This includes the antagonism usually displayed by their respective people and Allāh's help that came for His Messengers and their true followers. Some instances of this are the accounts of what happened between Prophet Mūsā and Fir'awn (Pharaoh), between Ibrāhīm and his people, as well as Nūḥ, Hūd, Ṣāliḥ, Shu'aib, Lūṭ and their respective nations. Still related to this is what Allāh told us of the relation between Yūsuf, his brothers and the people of Egypt; between Yūnus and his people, and the rest of what we find either in the

1- The implication here is that Sulaimān (ﷺ) could travel as long as two months' journey in just one day. Cf. *Tafsīr al-Sa'dī* p. 623. (Translator)

2- i.e. all things that a Prophet or monarch is usually given. (Translator)

Glorious Qur'ān or the *Sunnah* regarding the stories of Allāh's Prophets and Messengers. We must believe in all, minutely and as exactly recorded in those Islamic texts; thus, the general and thorough belief in the Messengers are established. Allāh, the Exalted knows best.

3.4 Our duty towards the Messengers of Allāh

The Muslim nation must uphold the rights due for Allāh's Messengers. This is in line with their lofty religious position and their high and superior ranking in the sight of Allāh (ﷻ). Furthermore, the honour He has conferred upon them by assigning to them dignified tasks, and by entrusting them exclusively with the duty of conveying His revelation and law to the entire creation.

These rights include:

1- Believing in whatever they have brought, and in the fact that all of them, without exception, were sent by their Lord, Allāh, to convey His message to whomever He sent them. Allāh (ﷻ) says,

﴿ وَمَآ أَرۡسَلۡنَا مِن رَّسُولٍ إِلَّا لِيُطَاعَ بِإِذۡنِ ٱللَّهِۚ ﴾.

And We sent no Messenger save that he should be obeyed by Allāh's Permission. (al-Nisā': 64).

﴿ وَأَطِيعُواْ ٱللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُواْ ٱلرَّسُولَ وَٱحۡذَرُواْۚ فَإِن تَوَلَّيۡتُمۡ فَٱعۡلَمُوٓاْ أَنَّمَا عَلَىٰ رَسُولِنَا ٱلۡبَلَٰغُ ٱلۡمُبِينُ ﴾.

And obey Allāh and obey the Messenger and beware! But if you turn away, then you should know that upon Our Messenger is only [the responsibility for] clear notification. (al-Mā'idah: 92).

﴿ إِنَّ ٱلَّذِينَ يَكۡفُرُونَ بِٱللَّهِ وَرُسُلِهِۦ وَيُرِيدُونَ أَن يُفَرِّقُواْ بَيۡنَ ٱللَّهِ وَرُسُلِهِۦ وَيَقُولُونَ نُؤۡمِنُ بِبَعۡضٖ وَنَكۡفُرُ بِبَعۡضٖ وَيُرِيدُونَ أَن يَتَّخِذُواْ بَيۡنَ ذَٰلِكَ سَبِيلًا ١٥٠ أُوْلَٰٓئِكَ هُمُ ٱلۡكَٰفِرُونَ حَقّٗاۚ ﴾.

Indeed, those who disbelieve in Allāh and His Messengers and wish to separate between [the belief in] Allāh and [the belief in] His Messengers and say, 'We believe in some, but reject others', and wish to take a course midway. They are, truly, the unbelievers… (al-Nisā': 150, 151).

Therefore, as a prerequisite of the belief in Allāh's Messengers, we should accept as true all what they have brought of the divine message.

In addition, it is necessary to know that neither mankind nor *jinn* are allowed to follow any of the past Messengers after the coming of Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ), who has been sent to all. His law has nullified all the preceding laws of the previous Prophets; hence, no religion is valid save that which Allāh has sent through this noble Prophet, and none but him alone may be followed. Allāh (ﷻ) says,

﴿ وَمَن يَبْتَغِ غَيْرَ ٱلْإِسْلَٰمِ دِينًا فَلَن يُقْبَلَ مِنْهُ وَهُوَ فِى ٱلْءَاخِرَةِ مِنَ ٱلْخَٰسِرِينَ ﴾.

And whoever desires other than Islam as religion – it will never be accepted from him. Yet, in the hereafter, he will be among the losers. (Āl-'Imrān: 85).

﴿ وَمَآ أَرْسَلْنَٰكَ إِلَّا كَآفَّةً لِّلنَّاسِ بَشِيرًا وَنَذِيرًا وَلَٰكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ ٱلنَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴾.

And We have not sent you [O Muḥammad] except to all mankind, as a bringer of good tidings and a warner. But most of the people do not know. (Saba': 28).

﴿ قُلْ يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلنَّاسُ إِنِّى رَسُولُ ٱللَّهِ إِلَيْكُمْ جَمِيعًا ﴾.

Say, 'O you people, indeed I am Allāh's Messenger to you all'. (al-A'rāf: 158).

2- Another right that is due for Allāh's Messengers is to love and support them, and avoid hating or contracting the enmity of any one of them. Allāh (ﷻ) says,

﴿ وَمَن يَتَوَلَّ ٱللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُۥ وَٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا۟ فَإِنَّ حِزْبَ ٱللَّهِ هُمُ ٱلْغَـٰلِبُونَ ﴾.

And whoever is an ally of Allāh, His Messenger and the believers- it is the party of Allāh that must certainly triumph. (al-Mā'idah: 56).

﴿ وَٱلْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَٱلْمُؤْمِنَـٰتُ بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلِيَآءُ بَعْضٍ ﴾.

And the believers, men and women are allies of one another. (al-Tawbah: 71).

The above verse describes the believers as being allies or helpers of one another, and Messengers of Allāh are no exception, being the most perfect in Faith. Hence, the love and support the believers have for the Messengers transcend such that they have for any other person, on the grounds of their exalted position in religion and their high status of Faith. Based on this, Allāh warned against harbouring enmity or hatred against the Messengers, and even mentioned this alongside the hostility towards Himself and His angels, making both equal in terms of any ensuing punishment or requital. He says,

﴿ مَن كَانَ عَدُوًّا لِّلَّهِ وَمَلَـٰٓئِكَتِهِۦ وَرُسُلِهِۦ وَجِبْرِيلَ وَمِيكَىٰلَ فَإِنَّ ٱللَّهَ عَدُوٌّ لِّلْكَـٰفِرِينَ ﴾.

Whoever is an enemy to Allāh, His angels, His Messengers and [Angels] Jibrīl and Mīkā'īl- then certainly, Allāh is an enemy to the disbelievers. (al-Baqarah: 98).

3- To believe that the Messengers are superior to the rest of mankind; no one, no matter how righteous and pious he/she may be, can reach their status. This is because being a bearer of Allāh's message comes exclusively through His own selection and not through diligence or hard work; Allāh chooses for His mission whomever He wills among His creation. Allāh (ﷻ) said,

﴿ ٱللَّهُ يَصۡطَفِي مِنَ ٱلۡمَلَٰٓئِكَةِ رُسُلٗا وَمِنَ ٱلنَّاسِۚ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ سَمِيعُۢ بَصِيرٞ ﴾.

Allāh chooses from the angels Messengers and from the people. Certainly Allāh is All-Hearing, All-Seeing. (al-Ḥajj: 75).

﴿ وَتِلۡكَ حُجَّتُنَآ ءَاتَيۡنَٰهَآ إِبۡرَٰهِيمَ عَلَىٰ قَوۡمِهِۦۚ نَرۡفَعُ دَرَجَٰتٖ مَّن نَّشَآءُۗ ﴾.

And that was Our [conclusive] argument which We gave Ibrāhīm against his people. We raise in degrees whom We will ... (al-An'ām: 83). In the verses following this, as we have mentioned earlier in this chapter, Allāh referred to a number of Prophets and Messengers and then said,

﴿ وَكُلّٗا فَضَّلۡنَا عَلَى ٱلۡعَٰلَمِينَ ﴾.

And all We preferred over the worlds[1]. (al-An'ām: 86).

The *Sunnah* also testifies to the supremacy of Allāh's Messengers over the rest of His creation. According to Abu Hurairah (ﷺ), the Prophet (ﷺ) said,

(لا ينبغي لعبد أن يقول: أنا خير من يونس بن متى).

It is unfit that a man should say, 'I am better than [Prophet] Yūnus the son of Matthew'. This version of the *ḥadīth* has been reported by both Bukhāri and Muslim (*Bukhāri*: 3416; *Muslim*: 2376[2]). Moreover, another version narrated only by Bukhāri reads as follows:

(من قال أنا خير من يونس بن متى فقد كذب).

Whoever says, 'I am better than Yūnus the son of Matthew' – has told a lie. (*Bukhāri*: 4604).

1- i.e. of their time, *Tafsīr al-Baghawi*, vol. i, p. 165. (Translator)

2- The *ḥadīth* as quoted above is from *ṣaḥīḥ Bukhāri*.

Some scholars commented on this *ḥadīth* saying, "The Prophet (ﷺ) said this with a view to prevent a situation where some ignorant people would assume what Allāh mentioned in the Glorious Qur'ān concerning Yūnus (عليه السلام) to be a sign of degradation for him. Muslim scholars explained further that what happened to Yūnus (عليه السلام) does not, in the least, bespeak a relegation for him as a Prophet. He was specifically mentioned in the above *ḥadīth* on the grounds of what Allāh has said of his case in the Glorious Qur'ān. For instance, Allāh (ﷻ) said,

﴿ وَذَا ٱلنُّونِ إِذ ذَّهَبَ مُغَٰضِبٗا فَظَنَّ أَن لَّن نَّقۡدِرَ عَلَيۡهِ فَنَادَىٰ فِي ٱلظُّلُمَٰتِ أَن لَّآ إِلَٰهَ إِلَّآ أَنتَ سُبۡحَٰنَكَ إِنِّي كُنتُ مِنَ ٱلظَّٰلِمِينَ ٨٧ فَٱسۡتَجَبۡنَا لَهُۥ وَنَجَّيۡنَٰهُ مِنَ ٱلۡغَمِّۚ وَكَذَٰلِكَ نُـۨجِي ٱلۡمُؤۡمِنِينَ ﴾.

And [remember] Dhū-nNūn[1] [i.e. Prophet Yūnus] when he departed in anger and thought that We would not decree [anything] upon him. And he cried out within the depths of darkness, 'None has the right to be worshipped but You [Allāh]; glorified be You. Truly, I have been of the wrongdoers'. So We responded to him and saved him from distress. And thus do We save the faithful. (al-Anbiyā': 87,88).

Allāh has also said,

﴿ وَإِنَّ يُونُسَ لَمِنَ ٱلۡمُرۡسَلِينَ ﴾.

And indeed, Yūnus was among the Messengers [of Allāh] ... (al-Ṣṣāffāt: 139-148).

1- Literally: 'The man of the fish or the whale'.

4- We should also believe that the Messengers themselves are not equal in status. Allāh has given preference to some of them over the others. He says,

﴿تِلْكَ ٱلرُّسُلُ فَضَّلْنَا بَعْضَهُمْ عَلَىٰ بَعْضٍ مِّنْهُم مَّن كَلَّمَ ٱللَّهُ وَرَفَعَ بَعْضَهُمْ دَرَجَٰتٍ﴾.

Those Messengers – some of them We caused to exceed others; among them were those to whom Allāh spoke, and others He raised to degrees [of honour]. (al-Baqarah: 253).

A famous scholar of the Qur'ānic exegesis, Imam Ṭabari, said in his commentary on this verse, "Allāh, the exalted says, those my Messengers; some of them I have made superior to others. To some, like Mūsa, I spoke directly, while I raised some above others in rank by honouring them and placing them highly". Hence, part of the rights we owe them as a Muslim nation is to place every one of them appropriately in terms of supremacy and high status, in, and not out of the context of the religious texts.

5- Asking Allāh to send His peace and blessing upon them. In fact Allāh has commanded us to do this, and informed us that the good praise and the *taslim* (asking Allāh to let His peace be upon someone) that people make for His Messengers shall remain for them even after their death. Allāh (ﷻ) says of Prophet Nūḥ (ﷺ),

﴿وَتَرَكْنَا عَلَيْهِ فِى ٱلْءَاخِرِينَ ۝٧٨ سَلَٰمٌ عَلَىٰ نُوحٍ فِى ٱلْعَٰلَمِينَ﴾.

And We left for him [favourable mention] among later generations. 'Peace be upon Nūḥ among the worlds'. (al-Ṣṣāffāt: 78, 79).

He also said of Ibrāhīm (ﷺ),

﴿ وَتَرَكْنَا عَلَيْهِ فِي الْآخِرِينَ ﴿١٠٨﴾ سَلَامٌ عَلَىٰ إِبْرَاهِيمَ ﴾.

And We left for him [favourable mention] among later generations. 'Peace be upon Ibrāhīm'. (al-Ṣṣāffāt: 108, 109).

And of Mūsā and Hārūn, He said.

﴿ وَتَرَكْنَا عَلَيْهِمَا فِي الْآخِرِينَ ﴿١١٩﴾ سَلَامٌ عَلَىٰ مُوسَىٰ وَهَارُونَ ﴾.

And We left for them [favourable mention] among later generations. 'Peace be upon Mūsā and Hārūn'. (al-Ṣṣāffāt: 119,120).

Furthermore, He said in a more general term,

﴿ وَسَلَامٌ عَلَى الْمُرْسَلِينَ ﴾.

And peace be on the Messengers. (al-Ṣṣāffāt: 181).

Imam Ibn Kathīr said while commenting on the above, "The saying of Allāh, **'Peace be upon Nūḥ among the worlds'** explains the favourable mention and praise which Allāh has left for Nūḥ, which means that every nation or group of people ask Allāh to bestow His peace upon him[1]".

Similarly, another erudite scholar, Imam al- Nawawi reported a consensus reached by Muslim scholars, declaring the invocation of Allāh's blessing on all the Prophets as not only lawful but even recommended. In his words, "Muslim scholars have unanimously agreed that it is lawful to ask for Allāh's blessing to be bestowed on our Prophet, Muḥammad (ﷺ). Likewise, those of reliable authority among the scholars have reached a consensus regarding the permissibility of this with respect to other Prophets, as well as the

1- *Ibn Kathīr, Tafsīr* vol. vii, p. 20.

angels, independently[1]. As for other people [i.e. other than the Prophets], the vast majority of Muslim scholars oppose doing this for them originally[2]".

These are some of what we should uphold concerning the rights of the Messengers of Allāh. They are well established in the Islamic texts and enjoy the support of the Muslim scholars. Allāh (ﷻ) knows best.

1- i.e. even when the name of Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ) has not been mentioned. (Translator)

2- i.e. unless they are mentioned along with the Prophet. (Translator)

3.5 Messengers described by Allāh as Men of Firm Resolution (*'Ulu al- 'Azm*)

The *''Ulu al- 'Azm'* among the Messengers are those who were both resolute and forbearing. Allāh (ﷻ) says,

﴿ فَٱصۡبِرۡ كَمَا صَبَرَ أُوْلُواْ ٱلۡعَزۡمِ مِنَ ٱلرُّسُلِ ﴾

So be patient [O Muḥammad], as were the Messengers of Firm Resolution. (al-Aḥqāf: 35).

Muslim scholars have different opinions concerning the identity of those Messengers; in the view of some, all Messengers of Allāh belong to this category. According to this viewpoint, the word 'من' which occurs in the original Arabic text of the above quoted verse refers merely to their (*'Ulu al- 'Azm's*) being Messengers of Allāh, and should not be mistaken for the other 'من' which denotes partition, and literally means: 'among' or 'of'. Ibn Zayd, one of the scholars who subscribe to this opinion, has this to say, "All Messengers of Allāh have been of determination. No Prophet [or Messenger] has ever been sent by Allāh, unless he was found to be resolute, judicious and discerning".

Another view held by some other scholars put the number of the '*'Ulu al- 'Azm*' at just five, namely: Nūḥ, Ibrāhīm, Musā, 'Īsa and Muḥammad, may the peace and blessing of Allāh be upon all of them. Speaking in support of this, Ibn 'Abbās (رضي الله عنهما) said, "The *'Ulu al- 'Azm* among the Messengers are: Prophets Muḥammad, Nūḥ, Ibrāhīm, Mūsā and 'Īsa, may the peace and blessings of Allāh be upon all of them". Subscribers to this view include Mujāhid, 'Aṭā' al-Khurasāni and many scholars of the later generations.

In the Glorious Qur'ān, Allāh mentioned those five Messengers together on two occasions, and this apparently serves as proof backing the latter opinion. In the chapter of *al-Aḥzāb*[1], Allāh (ﷻ) says,

﴿وَإِذْ أَخَذْنَا مِنَ ٱلنَّبِيِّـۧنَ مِيثَـٰقَهُمْ وَمِنكَ وَمِن نُّوحٍ وَإِبْرَٰهِيمَ وَمُوسَىٰ وَعِيسَى ٱبْنِ مَرْيَمَ ۖ وَأَخَذْنَا مِنْهُم مِّيثَـٰقًا غَلِيظًا﴾

And [remember, o Muḥammad] when We took from the Prophets their covenant, and from you and from Nūḥ and Ibrāhīm and Mūsa and 'Īsa, the son of Maryam; and We took from them a solemn covenant. (al-Aḥzāb: 7).

The other verse is in the chapter of *al-Shūrā*[2], where Allāh (ﷻ) says,

﴿شَرَعَ لَكُم مِّنَ ٱلدِّينِ مَا وَصَّىٰ بِهِۦ نُوحًا وَٱلَّذِىٓ أَوْحَيْنَآ إِلَيْكَ وَمَا وَصَّيْنَا بِهِۦٓ إِبْرَٰهِيمَ وَمُوسَىٰ وَعِيسَىٰٓ ۖ أَنْ أَقِيمُوا۟ ٱلدِّينَ وَلَا تَتَفَرَّقُوا۟ فِيهِ﴾

He [Allāh] has ordained for you of religion what He enjoined upon Nūḥ, and that which We have revealed to you [Muḥammad], and what We enjoined upon Ibrahīm [Abraham], Mūsa [Moses] and 'Īsa [Jesus] – to establish the religion and not be divided therein. (al-Shūrā: 13).

According to some scholars of the Qur'ānic exegesis, "The reason for this exclusive mention of just the names of those Messengers is to establish that they possess higher honour and dignity; as their laws were of the most well-known, while they themselves belonged to the class of the firmly resolute Messengers".

1- i.e. Chapter 33 of the Glorious Qur'ān.

2- i.e. Chapter 42 of the Glorious Qur'ān.

In addition, those five Prophets are the best of all the Messengers of Allāh, and of mankind as a whole. Abū Hurairah (ﷺ) said, "The elites among the descendants of Ādam are five: Nūḥ, Ibrāhīm, ʻĪsa, Mūsā and Muḥammad, while the best of these five is Muḥammad, may Allāh's peace and blessings be on all of them". (Reported by al-Bazzār –as in *Kashf al-Astār* vol. iii p. 114- ; *Majma' al-Zawā'id* vol viii p. 255; *al-Mustadrak* vol. ii, p. 546[1]).

In another *ḥadīth* which further states Prophet Muḥammad's supremacy as the best among the best, Abū Hurairah (ﷺ) quoted the Prophet (ﷺ) as saying,

(أنا سيد ولد آدم يوم القيامة وأول من ينشق عنه القبر وأول شافع وأول مشفع).

I shall be the leader for all mankind on the Day of Resurrection. I shall also be the first person to come out of his grave, the first intercessor and the first person whose intercession will be accepted. (*Muslim*: 2278; *Abū Dāwūd*: 4673, vol.v p.38).

1- The men of this *Isnād* (chain of transmission), according to Haithami, are men of the *ṣaḥiḥ ḥadīths*, and according to al-Ḥākim the chain of transmission is reliable. al-Dhahabi also assented to this.

3.6 The special qualities of our Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ) and the rights owed him by his followers. Also to be discussed here is the veracity of seeing him in a dream

(a) His special qualities

Allāh (ﷻ) has distinguished our Prophet (ﷺ) with many outstanding traits and qualities, with which He also set him above all other Messengers and the entire creation. These qualities include the following:

1- Universality of his mission, which embraces both mankind and *jinn*. Hence, they must all follow him and believe in his message. Allāh (ﷻ) says,

﴿ وَمَآ أَرْسَلْنَٰكَ إِلَّا كَآفَّةً لِّلنَّاسِ بَشِيرًا وَنَذِيرًا ﴾.

And We have not sent you [O Muḥammad] except to all mankind, as a bringer of good tidings and a warner ... (Saba': 28).

﴿ تَبَارَكَ ٱلَّذِى نَزَّلَ ٱلْفُرْقَانَ عَلَىٰ عَبْدِهِۦ لِيَكُونَ لِلْعَٰلَمِينَ نَذِيرًا ﴾.

Blessed be He [Allāh] Who sent down the Criterion [The Qur'ān] upon His servant that he may be to the worlds a warner. (al-Furqān: 1).

According to Ibn 'Abbās, (رضي الله عنهما) the phrase **"To the worlds"** means to mankind and *jinn*.

Abū Hurairah (ﷺ) also narrated that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said,

(فضلت على الأنبياء بست: أعطيت جوامع الكلم، ونصرت بالرعب، وأحلت لي الغنائم، وجعلت لي الأرض طهوراً ومسجداً، وأرسلت إلى الخلق كافة، وختم بي النبيون).

I have been granted privilege over all other Prophets in six respects. I am endowed with concise expression that carries a wide range of meaning, and have been helped with the fear [that my enemies feel in their heart, which makes them fearful of attacking

me]. Spoils have been made lawful for me, and the earth as *ṭahūr*[1] and place of worship. I am sent to the entire creation, and have been made the last of the Prophets. (*Muslim*: 523)

In a related development, Abu Hurairah also quoted the Prophet (ﷺ) as saying,

(والذي نفس محمد بيده لا يسمع بي أحد من هذه الأمة يهودي ولا نصراني، ثم يموت ولم يؤمن بالذي أرسلت به إلا كان من أصحاب النار).

By Him [Allāh] in whose Hand is the life of Muḥammad! Any member of this nation, whether a Jew or a Christian, who hears about me but fails to believe in what I have been sent with till he dies – he shall be one of the inhabitants of Hell-fire. (*Muslim*: 153).

2- His being the last of Allāh's Prophets and Messengers. Said Allāh (ﷻ),

﴿ مَّا كَانَ مُحَمَّدٌ أَبَآ أَحَدٍ مِّن رِّجَالِكُمْ وَلَٰكِن رَّسُولَ ٱللَّهِ وَخَاتَمَ ٱلنَّبِيِّـۧنَ ﴾.

Muḥammad is not the father of any one of your men, but [he is] the Messenger of Allāh and the last of the Prophets. (al-Aḥzāb: 40).

According to Abu Hurairah (ﷺ), as narrated by both Bukhāri and Muslim, the Prophet (ﷺ) has said,

1- Ṭahūr is anything that is itself pure, and may be used for ritual purification, such as clean water and sand. (Translator)

(إن مثلي ومثل الأنبياء من قبلي كمثل رجل بنى بيتاً فأحسنه وأجمله، إلا موضع لبنة من زاوية، فجعل الناس يطوفون به ويعجبون له ويقولون: هلا وضعت هذه اللبنة؟ قال: فأنا اللبنة وأنا خاتم النبيين).

My similitude in comparison with the Prophets before me is that of a man who has built a house finely and beautifully, except for a space for just one brick in a corner of that house. People go about the house and admire it, but also say, 'What if a brick had been put [in the space]'! The Prophet added, **'I am the brick; I am the last of the Prophets'.** (*Bukhāri*: 3535; *Muslim*: 2286[1]).

Having known these proofs, the Muslim nation as a whole, both past and present generations have unanimously agreed on this creed. They have similarly reached a consensus declaring whoever claims to be a Prophet, after Muḥammad (ﷺ), an infidel who must be subjected to capital punishment of death should he persist in this heretical claim. Al- Alūsi, a prominent Muslim scholar, said,

"Muḥammad's termination of prophet hood has been clearly stated in the Glorious Qur'ān and the *Sunnah*, while the Muslims have also unanimously agreed on that. Whoever claims the opposite is a disbeliever, and must face the death penalty should he insist on his claim".

3- Allāh has supported the Prophet (ﷺ) with the Glorious Qur'ān he revealed to him, as it is the greatest of all miracles and the most evident of all signs. It is the words of Allāh, well-protected against corruption and alteration, and shall remain with the Muslim nation until the time it will be raised again to Allāh, by His permission. Allāh (ﷻ) says,

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1- The *ḥadīth* as above is from the *Bukhāri* compilation.

﴿ قُل لَّئِنِ اجْتَمَعَتِ الْإِنسُ وَالْجِنُّ عَلَىٰ أَن يَأْتُوا بِمِثْلِ هَٰذَا الْقُرْآنِ لَا يَأْتُونَ بِمِثْلِهِ وَلَوْ كَانَ بَعْضُهُمْ لِبَعْضٍ ظَهِيرًا ﴾.

Say, 'If mankind and *jinn* gathered in order to produce the like of this Qur'ān, they could not produce the like thereof, even if they helped one another'. (al-Isrā': 88).

﴿ أَوَلَمْ يَكْفِهِمْ أَنَّا أَنزَلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ يُتْلَىٰ عَلَيْهِمْ ۚ إِنَّ فِي ذَٰلِكَ لَرَحْمَةً وَذِكْرَىٰ لِقَوْمٍ يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴾.

Is it not sufficient for them that We sent down to you the Book [the Qur'ān] which is recited to them? Indeed, therein is mercy and a reminder for a believing nation. (al-'Ankabūt: 51).

Bukhāri and Muslim narrated on the authority of Abu Hurairah (ﷺ) that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said,

(ما من الأنبياء نبي إلا أعطي من الآيات ما مثله آمن عليه البشر، وإنما كان الذي أوتيته وحياً أوحاه الله إلي، فأرجو أن أكون أكثرهم تابعاً يوم القيامة).

There has never been a Prophet except that Allāh gave him of miracles what led people to believe in him. What I have been given is the revelation which Allāh revealed to me, and I hope therefore, to have more followers than any other Prophet would have on the Day of Resurrection. (*Bukhāri*: 4981; *Muslim*: 152).

4- His nation is the best of all nations, and they will constitute the vast majority of the dwellers of Paradise. Allāh (ﷻ) says,

﴿ كُنتُمْ خَيْرَ أُمَّةٍ أُخْرِجَتْ لِلنَّاسِ تَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَتَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنكَرِ وَتُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ ﴾.

You are the best nation ever produced for mankind. You enjoin what is right, forbid what is wrong, and believe in Allāh. (Āl-'Imrān: 110).

According to Mu'āwiyah bin Ḥaidah al-Qushayri (ﷺ), the Prophet (ﷺ) explained the meaning of the just quoted verse as follows:

(إنكم تتمون سبعين أمة أنتم خيرها وأكرمها على الله).

You [i.e. my adherents] have come at the close of some seventy nations, out of which you are the best and most honourable in the Sight of Allāh. *(Musnad Aḥmad, vol. iv, p.447; Sunan Tirmidhi; 3001, vol. v, p. 226*[1]*).*

Another tradition narrated by 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd (ﷺ) has it that.

كنا مع النبي ﷺ في قبة فقال: (أترضون أن تكونوا ربع أهل الجنة). قلنا: نعم. قال: (أترضون أن تكونوا ثلث أهل الجنة). قلنا: نعم. قال: (أترضون أن تكونوا شطر أهل الجنة). قلنا: نعم. قال: (والذي نفس محمد بيده إني لأرجو أن تكونوا نصف أهل الجنة وذلك أن الجنة لا يدخلها إلا نفس مسلمة وما أنتم في أهل الشرك إلا كالشعرة البيضاء في جلد الثور الأسود، أو كالشعرة السوداء في جلد الثور الأحمر).

We were once in the company of the Prophet (ﷺ) in a tent, then he said, **'Would it please you to be one-fourth of the inhabitants of Paradise'?** We replied, 'Yes'. Then he said, **'Would it please you to be one-third of the inhabitants of Paradise'?** We said, 'Yes'. He said further, **'Would it please you to be half of the inhabitants of Paradise'?** We answered, 'Yes'. Then he said, **'By Him [Allāh] in whose Hand is the life of Muḥammad, I hope that you will indeed constitute half the number of the people of Paradise. No one shall enter Paradise except a soul that submits itself [to Allāh as Muslim], and you [my followers] in comparison to the polytheists**

1- The *ḥadīth* has been classified by Tirmidhi as *'ḥasan'*, but as *'ṣaḥīḥ'* by both Ḥākim and Dhahabi.

are just like a single white hair on the skin of a black ox, or a single black hair on the skin of a red ox'. (*Bukhārī*: 6528; *Muslim*: 221).

5- He shall be the pre-eminent personality among the descendants of Ādam on the Day of Resurrection. As we have quoted earlier[1], Abu Huriarah (ﷺ) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said,

(أنا سيد ولد آدم يوم القيامة، وأول من ينشق عنه القبر، وأول شافع، وأول مشفع).

I shall be the leader for all mankind on the Day of Resurrection. I shall also be the first person to come out of his grave, the first intercessor, and the first person whose intercession will be accepted. (*Muslim*: 2278; *Abū Dāwūd*: 4673, vol.v p.38).

6- He is the owner of the greatest intercession; when, on the Day of Resurrection, he shall intercede for the people at the *Mawqif*[2], pleading to their Lord [Allāh] to decide their cases without further delay. Before then, other Messengers of high repute, one after the other, would have tenably avoided playing this vital role, which Allāh described as 'station of praise' in the following verse:

﴿عَسَىٰٓ أَن يَبۡعَثَكَ رَبُّكَ مَقَامٗا مَّحۡمُودٗا﴾.

It is expected that your Lord will resurrect you to a station of praise. (al-Isrā': 79).

1- p. 254.

2- *Mawqif* literally means: stopping place, station, scene etc. In the context above, it refers to the gathering of all creatures in a single place on the Day of Resurrection. (Translator)

A number of the Prophet's companions and the generation after them (the *Tābi'ūn*) including Ḥudhaifah, Salman, Anas, Abu Hurairah, Ibn Mas'ūd, Jābir bin 'Abdullah, Ibn 'Abbās (ﷺ), Mujāhid, Qatādah and others have all interpreted the 'station of praise' mentioned above to mean the intercession. Qatādah, one of them, said, "The Muslim scholars used to construe the 'station of praise' as the Prophet's intercession on the Day of Resurrection".

The Prophet's intercession for the people at the *Mawqif* on the Day of Resurrection is further confirmed in the *Sunnah*; precisely in a lengthy tradition known as the '*ḥadīth* of intercession', reported by both Bukhāri and Muslim on the authority of Abu Hurairah (ﷺ). The *ḥadīth* points out that Prophets Ādam, Nūḥ, Ibrāhīm, Mūsā and 'Īsa -may Allāh's peace be on them- would all, in sequence, express their wish to be excused from doing the intercession, claiming that they are unsuitable for such an undertaking. The *ḥadīth* continues as follows:

(فيأتوني فأنطلق، فأستأذن على ربي فيؤذن لي عليه، فإذا رأيت ربي وقعت له ساجداً فيدعني ما شاء الله أن يدعني، ثم يقال لي: ارفع محمد، قل يُسمع، وسل تعطه، واشفع تُشفع فأحمد ربي بمحامد علمنيها ثم أشفع ...).

Thereafter, they would come to me (i.e. Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ), and I shall proceed to ask for an access to my Lord, which will be given. On seeing my Lord, I shall prostrate before Him, and He would leave me in that state as long as He would like. Then I shall be told, 'O Muḥammad, raise [your head] and speak, you will be listened to; and ask [for whatever you like], you will be granted your request; and intercede, your intercession will be accepted. I shall then praise my Lord with certain forms of praise He has taught me, and then intercede... (*Bukhāri*: 3340; *Muslim*: 193).

7- He owns the flag of praise; a real flag he shall carry exclusively on the Day of Resurrection, while the whole humanity will be subordinate to him, and gather under his banner. In the opinion of some Muslim scholars, the Prophet (ﷺ) deserves this on the grounds of his praising Allāh with certain words of praise, such that no other created being has ever used to praise Him. Pointing to the Prophet's exclusive possession of this excellent virtue, Abū Sa'īd al Khudri (ﷺ) quoted him as saying,

(أنا سيد ولد آدم يوم القيامة، وبيدي لواء الحمد ولا فخر، وما من نبي يومئذ آدم فمن سواه، إلا تحت لوائي، وأنا أول من تنشق عنه الأرض ولا فخر).

I shall be the pre-eminent person among mankind on the Day of Resurrection. The flag of praise shall be with me – I say this without boasting. Every Prophet, Ādam and others will all be under my flag. Let me add also, without boasting, that I shall be the first [person to come out alive] after the earth would have split apart. (*Sunan Tirmidhi*: 3615, vol. v, p. 587[1]).

8- The most esteemed position that will be accessible to only one person in Paradise, otherwise known as '*al-Wasīlah*', also belongs to the Prophet (ﷺ).'Abdullah bin 'Amr bin al-'Āṣ (رضي الله عنهما) reported to have heard Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) saying,

(إذا سمعتم المؤذن فقولوا مثل ما يقول ثم صلوا عليّ، فإنه من صلى عليّ صلاة صلى عليه الله بها عشراً، ثم سلوا الله لي الوسيلة، فإنها منزلة في الجنة لا تنبغي إلا لعبد من عباد الله، وأرجو أن أكون أنا هو فمن سأل لي الوسيلة حلت له الشفاعة).

1- Tirmidhi classified this *ḥadīth* as '*ḥasan-ṣaḥīḥ*'. Imam Aḥmad also narrated an almost identical version in his *Musnad* vol. iii, p. 2.

When you hear the *Mu'addhin*[1], repeat after him what he says and then ask for [Allāh's] blessings to be on me. Whoever invokes Allāh to bless me, shall receive that back from Him tenfold. After that, you should beseech Allāh to grant me the '*Wasīlah*'; a rank in Paradise accessible only to one of Allāh's servants, and I hope to be that servant. Anyone who asks [Allāh] to grant me the '*Wasīlah*', let him/her rest assured of my intercession. (*Muslim*: 384).

These and many other characteristics and outstanding traits of the Prophet (ﷺ) indicate his prominent position in the sight of Allāh, as well as his high status in this life and the life to come.

(b) What the followers of Prophet Muḥammad owe him as rights

Many are the rights that members of the Prophet's nation owe him. Some of these rights have been mentioned earlier as part of what the Muslim nation as a whole owes Allāh's Messengers generally. In the coming pages, we shall focus on those rights that are specifically for him (ﷺ).

1- To believe, in detail, in his prophet hood and message, with a conviction that his message has abrogated previous missions of the past Messengers. This necessitates to accept, as truth, whatever he said, and to act strictly according to his orders. In addition to shunning all what he has forbidden, and worshipping Allāh only in a manner he has prescribed. Proofs on this are in both the Glorious Qur'ān and the *Sunnah*. Allāh (ﷻ) says,

1- i.e. who calls people to come out and pray in the mosque at the appointed time of each obligatory prayer. (Translator)

﴿ فَـَٔامِنُوا۟ بِٱللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِۦ وَٱلنُّورِ ٱلَّذِىٓ أَنزَلْنَا ﴾.

So believe in Allāh and His Messenger and the Light [i.e. the Qur'ān], which We have sent down. (al-Taghābun: 8).

﴿ فَـَٔامِنُوا۟ بِٱللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ ٱلنَّبِىِّ ٱلْأُمِّىِّ ٱلَّذِى يُؤْمِنُ بِٱللَّهِ وَكَلِمَـٰتِهِۦ وَٱتَّبِعُوهُ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَهْتَدُونَ ﴾.

Believe, therefore, in Allāh and His Messenger, the unlettered Prophet, who believes in Allāh and His words. And follow him so that you may be guided. (al-A'rāf: 158).

﴿ وَمَآ ءَاتَىٰكُمُ ٱلرَّسُولُ فَخُذُوهُ وَمَا نَهَىٰكُمْ عَنْهُ فَٱنتَهُوا۟ ﴾.

And whatever the Messenger has given you –take it; and whatever he has forbidden you– refrain [from it]. (al-Ḥashr: 7).

'Abdullah bin 'Umar (رضي الله عنهما) narrated that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said,

(أمرت أن أقاتل الناس حتى يشهدوا أن لا إله إلا الله، وأن محمداً رسول الله، ويقيموا الصلاة، ويؤتوا الزكاة، فإذا فعلوا ذلك عصموا مني دماءهم وأموالهم إلا بحق الإسلام وحسابهم على الله).

I have been commanded to fight people until they testify that none has the right to be worshipped but Allāh and that Muḥammad is His Messenger, and perform the obligatory prayers (*Ṣalāh*), and pay *Zakāh*. If they do–then their lives and property are safe, except for another Islamic injunction [if violated], and their reckoning will be done by Allāh. (*Bukhārī*: 25; *Muslim*: 22).

2- It is compulsory to believe that the Messenger (ﷺ) did convey Allāh's message, discharged the trust, and offered useful advice to the people. Hence, he left no virtue without having encouraged and persuaded them to engage therein, and there was no vice except that he has forbidden and warned them not to commit it. Allāh (ﷻ) says,

﴿ٱلْيَوْمَ أَكْمَلْتُ لَكُمْ دِينَكُمْ وَأَتْمَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ نِعْمَتِي وَرَضِيتُ لَكُمُ ٱلْإِسْلَٰمَ دِينًا﴾.

This day I have perfected for you your religion, completed My Favour upon you, and approved for you Islam as religion. (al-Mā'idah: 3). According to Abū Dardā', the Prophet (ﷺ) has said,

(... وايم الله لقد تركتكم على مثل البيضاء، ليلها ونهارها سواء).

By Allāh! I have left you on a plain course; the night thereof is as clear as the day. (*Sunan Ibn Mājah* (preface), vol. i, p. 4 *ḥadīth* no. 5).

A testimony regarding the Prophet's conveyance of Allāh's message came from the Companions (رضي الله عنهم) at their largest ever congregation of the farewell pilgrimage. On that day, the Prophet had delivered a far-reaching sermon, during which he explained what Allāh either prescribed or forbidden for them, in addition to his advice for them to uphold the [laws of] the Book of Allāh. Lastly, the Prophet (ﷺ) remarked, **"You shall be questioned concerning me; what would you say"?**. They replied, 'We will bear witness that you have conveyed [the message], discharged [your duty as a Prophet] and offered [sincere] counsel'. At this point, he raised his forefinger towards the sky, then pointed it at the audience, and proclaimed, **"O Allāh, be witness [to this]"** three times. (*Muslim*: 1218[1]).

Another confirmation of this meaning appears in a saying of Abu Dharri (ﷺ) that, "By the time Muḥammad (ﷺ) left us [i.e. died], there was not even a single bird flapping its wings in the sky, except that he had told us something about it". (*Musnad Aḥmad* vol. v p. 153).

1- The *ḥadīth* is part of the Jābir bin 'Abdullah's detailed account of the Prophet's pilgrimage.

Sayings of our worthy predecessors and scholars in this respect are numerous.

3- To love him (ﷺ) more than we love our own selves and the entire creation. It is incontrovertible that we must love all the Prophets and Messengers of Allāh; however, our Prophet (ﷺ) has a special status in this regard. Hence, we should love him more than we love any other person, including our children, parents, relatives and even our own selves. Allāh (ﷻ) says,

﴿ قُلْ إِن كَانَ ءَابَآؤُكُمْ وَأَبْنَآؤُكُمْ وَإِخْوَٰنُكُمْ وَأَزْوَٰجُكُمْ وَعَشِيرَتُكُمْ وَأَمْوَٰلٌ ٱقْتَرَفْتُمُوهَا وَتِجَٰرَةٌ تَخْشَوْنَ كَسَادَهَا وَمَسَٰكِنُ تَرْضَوْنَهَآ أَحَبَّ إِلَيْكُم مِّنَ ٱللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِۦ وَجِهَادٍ فِى سَبِيلِهِۦ فَتَرَبَّصُوا۟ حَتَّىٰ يَأْتِىَ ٱللَّهُ بِأَمْرِهِۦ ۗ وَٱللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِى ٱلْقَوْمَ ٱلْفَٰسِقِينَ ﴾

Say, [O Muḥammad], "If your fathers[1], your sons, your brothers, your wives, your relatives, wealth which you have obtained, commerce wherein you fear decline, and dwellings with which you are pleased, are more beloved to you than Allāh, His Messenger and striving in His cause–then wait until Allāh executes His Command. And Allāh does not guide the defiantly disobedient people". (al-Tawbah: 24).

Thus, Allāh paired the love for Himself with the love for His Messenger (ﷺ), and subsequently threatened anyone who loves his wealth, family and children more than he loves Allāh or His Messenger by saying, **"Then wait until Allāh executes His Command. And Allāh does not guide the defiantly disobedient people".**

1- Or your parents (Cf. al-Sa'di, *Tafsīr* p. 292).

According to Anas bin Mālik (ﷺ), the Prophet (ﷺ) once said, (لا يؤمن أحدكم حتى أكون أحب إليه من والده وولده والناس أجمعين). **None of you can be true believer, unless he loves me more than he loves his parents, his children and the people in general.** (*Bukhāri*: 15; *Muslim*: 44).

In the same context, 'Umar bin al-Khaṭṭab (ﷺ) was reported to have addressed the Prophet (ﷺ) saying, "O Allāh's Messenger, you are dearer to me than any other thing except my own self." The Prophet (ﷺ) said, **"By Him (Allāh) in whose Hand is my life! That is not enough, until I become beloved to you even than your own self".** 'Umar then said to him, "I swear by Allāh that now you are more beloved to me even than my own self"! The Prophet (ﷺ) said, **"Now, O 'Umar [You have just said what you are expected to say as a believer[1]]".** (*Bukhāri*: 6632, on the authority of 'Abdullah bin Hishām).

4- To give him due respect, befitting honour and reverence, these are all part of his rights as enjoined by Allāh (ﷻ) in His Glorious Book. Allāh says,

﴿ لِّتُؤْمِنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَتُعَزِّرُوهُ [2] وَتُوَقِّرُوهُ [3] ﴾.

That you [people] may believe in Allāh and His Messenger, and honour him and respect him [i.e. the Prophet (ﷺ)]. (al-Fatḥ: 9).

1- See *Ibn Hajar, Fatḥu al-Bāri* vol. xi, p. 536 (Translator)

2- i.e. honour him, according to Ibn 'Abbās (رضي الله عنهما). This may also mean, in the opinion of Qatādah, 'support him'.

3- i.e. respect him, according to Ibn 'Abbās (رضي الله عنهما). Qatādah also interpreted this to mean an order from Allāh that the Prophet (ﷺ) must be made the leader.

﴿فَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا بِهِ وَعَزَّرُوهُ وَنَصَرُوهُ وَاتَّبَعُوا النُّورَ الَّذِي أُنزِلَ مَعَهُ أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ﴾.

So they who have believed in him [the Prophet (ﷺ)], honoured him, supported him and followed the Light which was sent down with him – it is those who will be the successful. (al-A'rāf: 157).

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تُقَدِّمُوا بَيْنَ يَدَيِ اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ﴾.

O you who believe, do not put [yourselves] before Allāh and His Messenger. (al-Ḥujurāt: 1).

﴿لَا تَجْعَلُوا دُعَاءَ الرَّسُولِ بَيْنَكُمْ كَدُعَاءِ بَعْضِكُم بَعْضًا﴾.

Do not make [your] calling of the Messenger among you as your calling of one another. (al-Nūr: 63).

The import here, according to Mujāhid - a well-known scholar of the Qur'ānic exegesis, is that "Allāh commanded them to say, humbly and gently, 'O Messenger of Allāh' whenever they needed to call his attention, and not to say, in a grim and unbecoming manner, 'O Muḥammad''.

The Companions of the Prophet (رضي الله عنهم) on their part, have presented highly remarkable examples of how to respect him (ﷺ). One of them, Usāmah bin Shuraik (رضي الله عنه) said, "I came to the Prophet (ﷺ) and found him surrounded by his Companions [who looked so calm and in awe of him] as if there were birds resting over their heads".

Honouring the Prophet (ﷺ) has not ceased with his death, but continues even after his demise. A prominent Muslim Scholar, Qāḍi 'Iyāḍ says accordingly, "Let it be known to you that giving due respect, honour and reverence to the Prophet (ﷺ) after his death, is as

compulsory as giving the same to him while he was alive. This applies specifically whenever his name is mentioned, or his *Sunnah* and *ḥadīths* are recited, or when one hears his biography. Similarly, we should –out of our respect for the Prophet (ﷺ)– maintain good relations with his immediate and extended family, and honour both his relations and companions".

5- Invoking Allāh's peace and blessing on the Prophet (ﷺ) very often is another duty we owe him, and even an order from Allāh, the Almighty, who has said,

﴿ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ وَمَلَٰٓئِكَتَهُۥ يُصَلُّونَ عَلَى ٱلنَّبِيِّۚ يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ صَلُّواْ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلِّمُواْ تَسْلِيمًا ﴾.

Indeed, Allāh confers blessing upon the Prophet, and His angels [ask Him to do so]. O you who believe, ask [Allāh to confer] blessing upon him, and ask [Allāh to grant him] peace. (al-Aḥzāb: 56).

A Muslim linguist called al-Mubarrid said, "The word '*ṣalah*' [mentioned in the above verse] originally denotes asking [Allāh] to bless someone. Hence, the word implies [conferring] mercy, on the part of Allāh (ﷻ), but affection and request for such a blessing from Him on the part of the angels". 'Abdullah bin 'Amr bin al-'Āṣ (رضي الله عنهما) narrated that Allāh's Messenger said,

(من صلى عليَّ صلاة صلى الله عليه بها عشراً).

"Anyone who asks [Allāh to confer] a blessing on me, Allāh will recompense him/her with tenfold blessings". (*Muslim*: 384).

In another *ḥadīth*, Ḥusain bin 'Ali bin Abi Ṭālib (رضي الله عنهما) also quoted the Prophet (ﷺ) as saying,

(البخيل الذي من ذكرت عنده فلم يصلِّ عليَّ).

The [real] miser is he who hears my name being mentioned, but does not ask [Allāh to confer] on me blessings. (*Sunan Tirmidhi*: 3546, vol. v, p. 551; *Musnad Aḥmad*, vol. i, p. 201[1]).

Asking Allāh to confer peace and blessing on someone is recommended generally in favour of all the Prophets as we have mentioned earlier. However, it is more emphatically established in the case of our Prophet (ﷺ), as one of the most important obligations owed him by his followers; hence, we have seen it fit to make special mention of that here. Muslim scholars have stated this religious obligation unequivocally, while some even recorded unanimous agreement on it. A prominent scholar and jurist, Qadi 'Iyāḍ, said in this connection, "Be informed that invoking [Allāh's] blessings upon the Prophet (ﷺ) is, by and large, a religious obligation, which is not restricted to a particular time. The order from Allāh in this respect implies obligation, in the opinion of the Muslim leaders and scholars, who have unanimously agreed on this".

6- Acknowledging all his firmly established outstanding traits, excellent characteristics and high status, whether those we have mentioned earlier in this book, or other traits and qualities that are equally proved in the Islamic texts. One should accept all this as true and use the said traits and characteristics to extol the Prophet (ﷺ). In addition, we must get this spread among the people and teach the same to our young ones, who should also be taught to love their

1- This is a "*ḥasan-ṣaḥīḥ gharib*" *ḥadīth*, according to Tirmidhi.

Prophet (ﷺ), honour him and be cognizant of his high position in the sight of Allāh (ﷻ).

7- Avoidance of excess in the course of honouring the Prophet (ﷺ). Care must be taken not to fall into this pitfall, as it amounts to a most dangerous harm to the person of the Prophet himself. Here is how Allāh commanded his Prophet (ﷺ) to address his followers:

﴿ قُلْ إِنَّمَآ أَنَا۠ بَشَرٌ مِّثْلُكُمْ يُوحَىٰٓ إِلَىَّ أَنَّمَآ إِلَٰهُكُمْ إِلَٰهٌ وَٰحِدٌ فَمَن كَانَ يَرْجُوا۟ لِقَآءَ رَبِّهِۦ فَلْيَعْمَلْ عَمَلًا صَٰلِحًا وَلَا يُشْرِكْ بِعِبَادَةِ رَبِّهِۦٓ أَحَدًۢا ﴾

Say, 'I am only a man like you, to whom has been revealed that your god is One God. So whoever would hope for the meeting with his Lord – let him do righteous deed, and not associate in the worship of his Lord anyone'. (al-Kahf: 110).

﴿ قُل لَّآ أَقُولُ لَكُمْ عِندِى خَزَآئِنُ ٱللَّهِ وَلَآ أَعْلَمُ ٱلْغَيْبَ وَلَآ أَقُولُ لَكُمْ إِنِّى مَلَكٌ ۖ إِنْ أَتَّبِعُ إِلَّا مَا يُوحَىٰٓ إِلَىَّ ﴾

Say, 'I do not tell you that I have the treasures of Allāh or that I know the unseen, nor do I tell you that I am an angel. I only follow what is revealed to me'. (al-Anʻām: 50).

Thus, Allāh instructed His Prophet (ﷺ) to declare to his nation that he was merely sent by Him, and that he neither possessed any quality of Lordship, nor was he an angel. Rather, he followed the order and revelation of his Lord. The Prophet (ﷺ) himself has cautioned his adherents against excess in their approach whether to his person, or to his praise and commendation. 'Umar (رضي الله عنه) quoted him as saying,

(لا تطروني كما أطرت النصارى ابن مريم فإنما أنا عبده، فقولوا: عبدالله ورسوله).

Do not extol me in a way similar to what the Christians have said concerning Ibn Maryam (i.e. Jesus the son of Mary); I am only a

servant of Allāh. You should therefore say (accordingly), 'A servant of Allāh and His Messenger'. (*Bukhārī*: 3445[1]).

Ibn al-Athīr, the renowned linguist and scholar, opined that '*Itrā*', being the Arabic word used in the above *ḥadīth*, means, precisely, giving an undue praise to someone or something.

In a separate narration, Ibn 'Abbās (رضي الله عنهما) said, "A man came to the Prophet (ﷺ) and after discussing with him certain issues he (the man) said, '[Such would be,] if Allāh and you will'. The Prophet (ﷺ) reacted to this by saying, **"Have you made me a peer of Allāh! Rather, what Allāh alone wills [shall be]".** (*Musnad Aḥmad*, vol i, p. 214[2]).

Here, the Prophet (ﷺ) warned against excess regarding his person, which would mean placing him above his human status and ascribing to him part of Almighty Allāh's exclusive qualities. This also represents an indirect warning against any other form of excess not mentioned above; exceeding the limits set for our approach to the person of the Prophet or his praise, in whatever way, is unlawful.

Some forms of this excess amount to associating partners with Allāh (ﷻ), such as when a person turns to the Prophet in supplication and say, 'O Messenger of Allāh, do so and so for me'. This is evidently a supplication (*du'ā*), and supplication is an act of worship that must be directed to none but Allāh (ﷻ) alone.

1- An almost identical version occurs as well in *Musnad Aḥmad*, vol. i, p. 23.

2- An almost identical version occurs as well in *Sunan Ibn Mājah*: 2117.

Other facets of excess regarding the person of the Prophet (ﷺ) include:

- **Offering sacrificial animal in his name.**
- **Making a vow for him.**
- **Performing ritual circumambulation round his grave, or facing the grave during *ṣalah* (prayer) or any other act of worship.**

All this is unlawful, as those acts constitute acts of worship, which Allāh has ordered to be dedicated to Him alone and not to any created being. Allāh says,

﴿ قُلْ إِنَّ صَلَاتِي وَنُسُكِي وَمَحْيَايَ وَمَمَاتِي لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿١٦٢﴾ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ ۖ وَبِذَٰلِكَ أُمِرْتُ وَأَنَا أَوَّلُ الْمُسْلِمِينَ ﴾.

Say, 'Indeed, my prayer, my service of sacrifice, my living and my dying are for Allāh, Lord of the worlds. No partner has He. And this I have been commanded, and I am the first [among you] of the Muslims'. (al-An'ām: 162, 163).

8- It is part of our obligations towards the Prophet (ﷺ) to love and support his companions and relations- including his wives, and not to use degrading or insulting language for them. This is because Allāh has enjoined on the Muslims to love and support the Companions of his Prophet (ﷺ), as He has also encouraged the generations after them to beseech Him to forgive the Companions' sins, and not to put in their hearts any resentment towards those Companions of their Prophet (ﷺ).

Thus, Allāh (ﷻ) said after he had mentioned the *Muhājirūn*[1] *and the Anṣār*[2] among the Companions (ﷺ),

﴿وَالَّذِينَ جَاءُو مِن بَعْدِهِمْ يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا اغْفِرْ لَنَا وَلِإِخْوَانِنَا الَّذِينَ سَبَقُونَا بِالْإِيمَانِ وَلَا تَجْعَلْ فِي قُلُوبِنَا غِلًّا لِّلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا رَبَّنَا إِنَّكَ رَءُوفٌ رَّحِيمٌ﴾.

And those who came after them say, 'Our Lord, forgive us and our brothers who preceded us in Faith and put not in our hearts rancour towards those who have believed. Our Lord, You are indeed, Kind and Merciful'. (al-Ḥashr: 10).

He also said concerning the relatives and the household of His Messenger (ﷺ),

﴿قُل لَّا أَسْأَلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ أَجْرًا إِلَّا الْمَوَدَّةَ فِي الْقُرْبَىٰ﴾.

Say, 'I do not ask you for it [i.e. the Message I have brought] any reward, except goodwill due to [my] kinship [with you]'. (al-Shūrā: 23).

According to some, this verse may also be interpreted as follows, "Say to those believers who have followed you, 'I do not request any payment from you in return for what I have brought to you, except that you love my relatives'."

Zayd bin Arqam (ﷺ) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) once stood up and addressed the people saying,

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1- i.e. the Emigrants; those who emigrated from Makkah to Madinah at the instance of the Prophet (ﷺ). (Translator)

2- i.e. the Helpers; the Muslim inhabitants of the Madinah city at the time of the Hijrah or emigration. (Translator)

(أما بعد ألا أيها الناس. فإنما أنا بشر يوشك أن يأتي رسول ربي فأجيب وأنا تارك فيكم ثقلين: أولهما كتاب الله فيه الهدى والنور. فخذوا بكتاب الله واستمسكوا به). فحث على كتاب الله ورغب فيه ثم قال: (وأهل بيتي أذكركم الله في أهل بيتي. أذكركم الله في أهل بيتي، أذكركم الله في أهل بيتي).

Now to our purpose. O you people! I am a human being [like you]. Perhaps I am about to receive the Messenger of my Lord [i.e. the angel of death] whom I shall answer. [But] I am leaving among you two weighty things, the first of which is the Book of Allah (i.e. the Glorious Qur'ān) that contains guidance and light. So stick to the Book of Allāh and hold fast to it. [Thus, he urged us to hold fast to the Book of Allāh and then said,] **"And [the second thing is] my relations. I remind you [to fear] Allāh [regarding your duties] towards my relations. I remind you [to fear] Allāh [regarding your duties] towards my relations. I remind you [to fear] Allāh [regarding your duties] towards my relations".** (*Muslim*: 2408).

In this way, the Prophet (ﷺ) did command us to be kind to his family and to value their worth and rights very highly, in recognition of their honour and relation to him. He has equally advised us to treat his Companions with respect, and warned against abusing or insulting any of them. Abū Sa'īd al-Khudri (ﷺ) quoted the Prophet (ﷺ) as saying,

(لا تسبوا أصحابي فلو أنّ أحدكم أنفق مثل أحد ذهباً ما بلغ مد أحدهم ولا نصيفه).

Do not abuse my Companion, for if any of you should spend [in Allāh's cause] an amount of gold that is as huge as *Uḥud*[1], that

1- A mountain on the outskirts of Madinah. (Translator)

would not be equal to the reward of even a *mudd*[1] or half *mudd* spent by one of them. (*Bukhārī*: 3673, *Muslim*: 2541[2]).

It has always been a basic and undisputed principle of the Orthodox Sunni Muslims (*Ahl al-Sunnah*) to love the Companions of the Prophet (ﷺ), as well as his relatives and wives. They see the defamation of any or all of the Companions as a mark of aberration and straying from the right path. Said Abū Zur'ah, a notable Muslim scholar, "If you see a man making disparaging remark about a Companion of Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ), then you should know that he is a heretic". Another erudite Scholar, Imam Aḥmad bin Ḥanbal also said, "If you see a man using a degrading language for a Companion of Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ), you should be suspicious of the man's claim to be a Muslim".

The foregoing is only brief presentation of part of the rights owed the Prophet (ﷺ) by his followers. May Allāh (ﷻ) guide us and our Muslim brothers, so that we may fulfil our obligations in this respect.

1- A *mudd* in measurement approximately consists of 543 grams of grain or the like. (Translator)

2- The *ḥadīth* as quoted above has been taken from the *Bukhārī's* book.

(c) Elaborating on the veracity of seeing the Prophet (ﷺ) in a dream

The contingency of seeing the Prophet (ﷺ) while sleeping has been established through evidences in the *Sunnah*. The implication thereby is that whoever sees him in a dream, has truly seen his person, and not someone else resembling him. According to Abū Hurairah (ﷺ), the Prophet (ﷺ) himself has said,

(من رآني في المنام فقد رآني. فإنَّ الشيطان لا يتمثل بي).

Anyone who saw me while sleeping has, in reality, seen me as a person. Satan (the Devil) cannot imitate my personality. (*Muslim*: 2266).
Another version of the *ḥadīth* also narrated by Abū Hurairah (ﷺ) reads as follows,

(من رآني في المنام فسيراني في اليقظة، ولا يتمثل الشيطان بي).

Whoever saw me in a dream, shall also see me while he is awake [i.e. with his own eyes]. Satan cannot impersonate my identity. (*Bukhāri*: 6993; *Muslim*: 2266).

Imam Bukhāri, who transmitted this *ḥadīth*, added that the narrator, Ibn Sīrīn remarked, "provided that the person has seen him in his real form". Jābir bin 'Abdullah (ﷺ) also quoted the Prophet (ﷺ) as saying,

(من رآني في النـــوم فقد رآني فإنه لا ينبغي للشيطان أن يتشبه بي).

Whoever saw me while asleep – no doubt, he has seen me as a person. It is improper for Satan to assume my identity. (*Muslim*: 2268).

Based on the contents of the above *ḥadīths*, it is feasible to see the Prophet (ﷺ) in a dream, and whoever does, he/she has actually seen none but the Prophet (ﷺ) himself, for Satan has been incapacitated to assume his shape. However, we should be mindful of the fact that the true vision being referred to in these *ḥadīths* is

applicable only when the person has seen the Prophet (ﷺ) in his real shape, based on what is known of his qualities and description. The statement by Ibn Sīrīn, as quoted above, precisely touched on this point. Imam Bukhāri also intentionally mentioned the statement after the *ḥadīth* immediately, with the aim of clarifying the nature of the vision reported in the *ḥadīth*. Also conforming to this is another narration by al-Ḥākim on the authority of 'Āṣim bin Kulaib who said, "I was informed by my father that he said to Ibn 'Abbās (رضي الله عنهما), 'I have seen the Prophet (ﷺ) in a dream'. Ibn 'Abbās said, 'Describe him to me'. Kulaib, the original narrator continued, 'I then mentioned al-Ḥasan bin 'Ali (رضي الله عنهما), citing his resemblance to the Prophet (ﷺ). Ibn 'Abbās then remarked, "He, truly, resembled him". (*Al-mustadrak* vol. iv, p. 393[1]).

Another narrator called Ayyūb said, "Whenever a man informed Muḥammad ibn Sīrīn[2] that he had seen the Prophet (ﷺ) [in a dream], he would ask him to describe for him whom he saw. If the description proves alien to what he (Ibn Sīrīn) knows, he would then say, 'You have not seen the Prophet (ﷺ)'." Ibn Ḥajar, who reported this in his book: *Fatḥ al-Bāri*, classified the chain of transmission as sound.

On the saying of the Prophet (ﷺ),"**Whoever saw me in a dream, shall also see me while he is awake [i.e. with his own**

1- This is a *ṣaḥīḥ ḥadīth*, according to both Ḥākim and Dhahabi. Ibn Ḥajar also judged the chain of transmission as *'Jayyid'* (good).

2- He is the same Ibn Sīrīn mentioned earlier in this chapter - a well-known Muslim scholar who died in the second century of the Hijra (Muslim calendar). (Translator)

eyes]", Muslim scholars have expressed different opinions concerning the import of the last clause in the *ḥadīth*. The most famous of these views are as follows:

1- The vision mentioned in that clause is a mere comparison, that is, compared to what one sees with his own eyes. This view enjoys the support of another version of the same *ḥadīth*, which reads as follows:

(فكأنما رآني في اليقظة).

It is as if he has seen me while he was awake. (Reported by *Muslim* on the authority of Abū Hurairah ﷺ).

2- Seeing the Prophet (ﷺ) with one's own eyes, as mentioned in the *ḥadīth*, has been peculiar to those of his contemporaries who believed in him even before they were privileged to catch sight of him.

3- The clause refers to what will happen on the Day of Resurrection, when those who have seen the Prophet (ﷺ) in a dream will be granted special privileges above those who have not. Allāh (ﷻ) knows best.

3.7 Prophet Muḥammad's message as the final of all divine messages; hence, no Prophet shall come after him

The topic has been discussed earlier in this book, and the proofs thereof were mentioned when we talked about the characteristics of the Prophet (ﷺ), and that he was the last of all Prophets of Allāh. However, our discussion here shall focus on the impact this belief in the termination of divine messages with the coming of Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ) has on the Muslims' faith, and what they stand to gain in having such a belief. These include:

1- Finality of the Islamic legislation, perfection of the religion, as well and the great impact of both on the life of the Muslims. For these reasons, Allāh reminded us of His favour in this respect when He said, ﴿ٱلْيَوْمَ أَكْمَلْتُ لَكُمْ دِينَكُمْ وَأَتْمَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ نِعْمَتِي وَرَضِيتُ لَكُمُ ٱلْإِسْلَٰمَ دِينًا﴾. **This day I have perfected for you your religion, completed my Favour upon you, and have approved for you Islam as religion.** (al-Mā'idah: 3).

This verse was revealed to the Prophet (ﷺ) during his farewell pilgrimage; just a few months prior to his death, at a time Allāh had completed for him the law of Islam. No wonder, the Jewish community used to envy the Muslims on account of what Allāh revealed in the verse. A narration by both Bukhāri and Muslim reveals that a Jew came to 'Umar bin al-Khaṭṭāb (ﷺ) and said, "Had that verse, which you read in your book, been revealed to us, i.e. Jews, we would have made the day it was revealed a festival". 'Umar (ﷺ) asked, "Which verse is that"?. The man replied, **"This day I have perfected for you your religion".** (*Bukhāri*: 45; *Muslim*: 3017).

The Prophet (ﷺ) himself portrayed this fact in a physical context by likening the past Messages before him to a well-built palace, with every component being intact, except for a place of one brick. Muḥammad's Message was that missing brick and has since been used to complete the edifice. This apparently shows that Islam, and in fact all other divine messages as a whole, cannot, under any circumstances, accommodate any addition, as it is equally impossible to add any brick to that palace after it had been completely built. The *ḥadīth* of "the brick" we now quote has been mentioned earlier when we discussed the characteristics of the Prophet (ﷺ). The reader may therefore refer to that section for details.

2- This creed instils in the Muslims confidence that neither their religion nor the law of their Prophet (ﷺ) could be abrogated or outdated with the coming of a new Prophet. The termination of prophet hood with the message of Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ) implies that no new Prophet shall further come and no new law will be sent after his prophet hood and his law. The coming of 'Īsa (Jesus ﷺ), even as he will maintain his status as a Prophet, does not contradict this fact. Jesus, in his second coming to this world (i.e. his descent from heaven before the Day of Resurrection), shall follow the law sent to Muḥammad (may Allāh's peace and blessings be on both), and not his own former law which, in reality, has been abrogated. In other words, he shall be an adherent of the law of our Prophet, fundamental and non-fundamental aspects alike.

3- With this belief, Muslims will have no doubt whatsoever that whoever claims to be a Prophet after Muḥammad (ﷺ) is an outright liar. This represents a most notable benefit the Muslim community derive from the creed of the finality of prophet hood. They are protected thereby from falling into the trap of impostors who claim to be prophets. For this same reason, the Prophet (ﷺ) committed himself purposely and wilfully to warning his followers of the danger posed by those impostors, when he affirmed the belief in himself as the final Prophet of Allāh. In line with this, the Prophet (ﷺ) informed us of some thirty liars among the Muslim nation, who shall claim the status of a Prophet. He then made it known that no Prophet will be sent after him; thus, warning his followers not to believe in or follow those liars. This is contained in a *ḥadīth* narrated by Thawbān (ﷺ) who quoted the Prophet (ﷺ) as saying,

(... وإنه سيكون في أمتي ثلاثون كذابون كلهم يزعم أنه نبي وأنا خاتم النبيين لا نبي بعدي).

Indeed, there will be among my nation thirty impostors who shall all claim to be prophets, while I am [in truth,] the last Prophet. No Prophet shall come after me. (*Sunan Tirmidhi:* 2219, vol. iv, p. 499[1]).

4- It is also clear from this that Muslim leaders and scholars occupy distinguished positions in the Muslim nation. Allāh (ﷻ) has entrusted them to govern the people and manage both their religious and worldly affairs, unlike the children of Israel whose affairs were solely run by their Prophets. Abū Hurairah (ﷺ) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said,

1- The *ḥadīth* has been classified by Tirmidhi as "*ḥasan-ṣaḥīḥ*". Abū Dawūd also reported a similar version on the authority of Abū-Hurairah (*Sunan Abū Dawūd*: 4333, 4334, vol. iv p. 329).

(كانت بنو إسرائيل تسوسهم الأنبياء كلما هلك نبي خلفه نبي، وإنه لا نبي بعدي، وستكون خلفاء تكثر). قالوا: فما تأمرنا؟ قال: (فوا ببيعة الأول فالأول وأعطوهم حقهم فإن الله سائلهم عما استرعاهم).

The children of Israel were ruled by their Prophets; each time a Prophet passed away he was succeeded by another. No Prophet shall come after me, but there will be successors who shall increase in number. The audience asked, "What then would you order us to do"? He replied, **"Obey anyone that will be the first to whom a pledge of allegiance has been given, and give them (i.e. the rulers) their due rights. Allāh will ask them about what He has put under their custody".** (*Bukhāri*: 3455; *Muslim*: 1842[1]).

The position of Muslim rulers of this nation, in terms of governance and administration, is therefore equivalent to that of the Prophets among the children of Israel. Another *ḥadīth* narrated by Abū Hurairah (ﷺ) has it that,

(إن الله يبعث لهذه الأمة على رأس كل مائة سنة من يجدد لها دينها).

At the end of every hundred years, Allāh will bring forth for this nation whoever will reform its religion. (*Sunan Abū Dāwūd:* 4291, vol. iv, p. 313; *al-Mustadrak* vol.iv, p. 522[2]).

The condition of the Muslim nation (*Ummah*) also testifies to this, as both religious and worldly affairs have always been ideally managed through those caliphs, rulers and scholars who handle the

1- The *ḥadīth* as quoted above has been taken from the book of Muslim.

2- This is a *ṣaḥīḥ* (authentic) *ḥadīth*, according to both Ḥākim and Dhahabi.

people's affairs in accordance with the provisions of the law of Islam. Furthermore, Allāh (ﷻ) keeps renovating for the Muslim nation whatever has become obliterated of the landmarks of their religion throughout the ages. He does this through Muslim reformers who dissociate His Noble Book from distortions of the extremists, false claims by the impostors, and from the misinterpretation of those who are ignorant. Thus, Allāh's religion remains, through them, as fresh as ever; no matter how ancient the Message of the Prophet (ﷺ) has become. This is a favour that Allāh bestowed on this nation generally, and particularly on those whom He has honoured with such a responsibility.

At any rate, the belief in the termination of prophet hood and its impacts on religion are considered prominent features of this nation, which impart to it strong faith with certainty, positiveness, deep-rootedness and stability, until the time Allāh's order will come[1].

1- i.e. until the Day of Resurrection. (Translator)

3.8 The Messenger's Night Journey (*al-Isrā'*): Facts and proofs

Definition:

Linguistically, the word "*al-Isrā'*" is derived from another Arabic word "*surā*", which denotes either a journey for the whole night or for the most part of it. Hence, it is commonly said, "Saraytu" or "Asraytu" as derivable verbs. Ḥassān[1] said in some of his poetry,

أَسْرَتْ إليكَ ولـــمْ تَكُن تُسْري

Meaning: "She travelled to you by night, and she has not been doing so before".

However, as an Islamic term, whenever the word "*isrā'*" is mentioned, nothing comes to mind but the Messenger of Allāh's night journey from the Sacred Mosque in Makkah to the Jeruslaem Mosque, and his returning trip the same night.

The reality and proofs of "*Isrā'*" (The Night Journey)

The Night Journey was a great sign Allāh has used to support the Prophet (ﷺ) before the emigration to Madīnah. He was taken for the journey by night from the Grand Mosque (*Al-Masjid al-Ḥarām*) in Makkah, to the Far Distant Mosque (*Al-Masjid al-Aqṣā*) in Jerusalem. He rode the *Burāq*[2], and was in the company of Angel Jibrīl (ﷺ). On arrival at Jerusalem, the Prophet (ﷺ) tied up his riding animal (*Burāq*) to the ring of the door of the mosque. He then entered the mosque and led other Prophets in prayer. Thereupon, Angel Jibrīl (ﷺ) brought him a drinking vessel containing wine, and another one

1- i.e. Ḥassan bin Thābit (ؓ), a Companion of the Prophet (ﷺ). (Translator)

2- i.e. a riding animal with this name. (Translator)

containing milk. The Prophet (ﷺ) chose the vessel of milk, and Jibrīl said to him, "You have been guided to the sound nature". Proofs from the Qur'ān and the *Sunnah* on the incident of the Night Journey include the following:

Allāh (ﷻ) says,

﴿ سُبْحَٰنَ ٱلَّذِىٓ أَسْرَىٰ بِعَبْدِهِۦ لَيْلًا مِّنَ ٱلْمَسْجِدِ ٱلْحَرَامِ إِلَى ٱلْمَسْجِدِ ٱلْأَقْصَا ٱلَّذِى بَٰرَكْنَا حَوْلَهُۥ لِنُرِيَهُۥ مِنْ ءَايَٰتِنَآ ۚ إِنَّهُۥ هُوَ ٱلسَّمِيعُ ٱلْبَصِيرُ ﴾.

Glorified is He [Allāh] who took His servant [Muḥammad ﷺ] for a journey by night from the Sacred Mosque [in Makkah] to the Far Distant Mosque [in Jerusalem], whose surroundings We have blessed, to show him of Our signs. Indeed He [Allāh] is the Hearing, the Seeing. (al-Isrā': 1).

As for evidence from the *Sunnah*, Anas bin Mālik (ﷺ) narrated that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said,

(أُتيت بالبراق (وهو دابة أبيض طويل فوق الحمار ودون البغل يضع حافره عند منتهى طرفه) [قال:] فركبته حتى أتيت بيت المقدس. [قال:] فربطته بالحلقة التي يربط به الأنبياء، [قال:] ثم دخلت المسجد فصليت فيه ركعتين، ثم خرجت فجاءني جبريل عليه السلام بإناء من خمر وإناء من لبن فاخترت اللبن. فقال جبريل ﷺ: اخترت الفطرة).

***Al-Burāq*, a white tall animal that is bigger than a donkey but smaller than a mule, was brought to me. The animal's step [was so wide that it] reached the farthest point within the reach of its sight. I rode on its back till I reached Jerusalem. There, I tied it up to the ring, which was normally used for the same purpose by the [former] Prophets. Then, I entered the mosque and performed**

two *raka'ahs*[1]. After that, I came out only to meet Jibrīl (ﷺ) coming to me with two drinking vessels; one of wine, and the other was of milk. I chose the [vessel of] milk, and Jibrīl said, 'You have chosen the [sound] nature[2]'. The *ḥadīth* continued with the account of how the Prophet (ﷺ), subsequently, ascended to heaven. (*ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*: 162).

The Prophet's (ﷺ) Night Journey has been mentioned in a number of *ḥadīths,* some of which are in the books of *Bukhāri* and *Muslim*[3], as well as other compilations of the *ḥadīth,* including the *Sunan*[4]. About thirty of the Companions of the Prophet (ﷺ) narrated these *ḥadīths,* while other narrators among Muslim scholars and traditionists are too many to be counted.

Muslims scholars throughout all ages never disputed the genuineness of the Night Journey. Moreover, some of them, like Qāḍi 'Iyāḍ in his book *Al-Shifā,* and Safarīni in *Lawāmi' al-Anwār,* have reported consensus on this issue.

The Prophet (ﷺ) was fully awake when the journey took place; thus, he has engaged in it with both his body and spirit. This is what we are told in the authentic religious texts, and is also the opinion of the Companions of the Prophet (ﷺ), as well as scholars of the *Ahl al-Sunnah* (The Orthodox Sunni Muslims) and their academic authorities.

1- A unit of the Muslims prayer (Ṣalāh) is called *raka'ah.* (Translator)

2- The contextual interpretation of the word "الفطرة" or nature here would mean Islam and probity. See: Al-Nawawi's commentary on *ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* vol. ii, p. 212. (Translator)

3- i.e. the most authentic compilations of the *ḥadīths*.

4- i.e. the books of Tirmidhi, Abū Dāwūd, al-Nasāi and Ibn Mājah.

In the words of Ibn Abi al-'Izz al-Ḥanafi, a well-known scholar, "The *ḥadīth* of the Night Journey, according to the correct opinion, reveals among other things that the Prophet (ﷺ) was, physically and in a state of full consciousness, taken for the journey by night from the Sacred Mosque to the Far Distant Mosque". While confirming that this has been the view of all Muslim scholars among the Companions and the generations after them, another notable scholar, Qāḍi 'Iyāḍ also said, "In the opinion of the majority of our righteous predecessors (*Salaf*) and the Muslims generally, the Night Journey was that of the body which took place while the Prophet (ﷺ) was awake. This is the truth and was the view held by [the Prophet's Companions and their followers such as] Ibn 'Abbās, Jābir, Anas, Ḥudhaifah, 'Umar, Abū Hurairah, Mālik bin Ṣa'ṣa'ah, Abū Ḥabbah al-Badri, Ibn Mas'ūd, al-Ḍaḥḥāk, Sa'īd bin Jubair, Qatādah, Ibn al-Musayyib, Ibn Shihāb, Ibn Zayd, al-Ḥasan, Ibrāhīm, Masrūq, Mujāhid, 'Ikrimah and Ibn Juraij. It is also a proof to the opinion held by 'Aishah (رضي الله عنها). Scholars like Ṭabari and Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal have similarly subscribed to this view. Furthermore, it is the opinion of a very large group of Muslims, and most of the later-date Muslim Jurists, Traditionists, Theologists and scholars of the Noble Qur'ān exegesis".

In a critique of the view that the Night journey took place twice, a well-versed Muslim scholar said, "The unerring view as held by the leading experts in the field of the *ḥadīth* is that the Night Journey took place only once, and that was in Makkah after the Prophet (ﷺ) had been sent as a Messenger of Allāh. What an odd view

is that which tries to portray the event as a recurring one! Besides, imagine how strange does it sound to assume that each time the event took place, fifty prayers were initially prescribed for the Prophet (ﷺ) but were later reduced to five after repeated movements between his Lord and Prophet Mūsa (عليه السلام). While Allāh (ﷻ) would then say, 'I have decreed My obligation and reduced the burden for My servants', but would revert the number to fifty again the second time, and now start afresh to reduce it ten, ten"!

Facts surrounding Prophet Muḥammad's ascension to heaven

As far as the religious texts and the scholars' remarks are concerned, we can hardly separate the issue of the Prophet's ascension (*Mi'rāj*) from that of the Night Journey (*Isrā'*). Hence, for the benefit of the reader, it is pertinent that we define the term "*Mi'rāj*" now.

Mi'rāj, being a derivative of another Arabic word "'Urūj", means a ladder-like instrument used to ascend or climb something, even though we do not know how exactly the tool used by the Prophet (ﷺ) looked like.

As an Islamic term, *al-Mi'rāj* is strictly used to designate the ascension of the Prophet (ﷺ) together with Angel Jibrīl, from Jerusalem to the nearest heaven, and then to the other heavens up to the seventh one. It also comprises his seeing other Prophets in those heavens -each in his position, as well as his greeting to them and their welcoming him. After which he proceeded to the Lotus Tree of the Utmost Boundary (*Sidrat al-Muntahā*) where he saw Jibrīl in his real shape. Thereafter, on that very night, he received Allāh's injunction to

perform five daily obligatory prayers. Allāh communicated this to him directly in spoken words, then he descended back to the earth. Both his ascension to heaven and the Night Journey took place on the same night; as per the correct view regarding this issue.

The Qur'ān and the *Sunnah* contain proofs on the event of the Prophet's ascension. The Qur'ānic proofs in this regard include references to great signs witnessed by the Prophet (ﷺ) on that important night. Allāh (ﷻ) says,

﴿ أَفَتُمَٰرُونَهُۥ عَلَىٰ مَا يَرَىٰ ﴿١٢﴾ وَلَقَدْ رَءَاهُ نَزْلَةً أُخْرَىٰ ﴿١٣﴾ عِندَ سِدْرَةِ ٱلْمُنتَهَىٰ ﴿١٤﴾ عِندَهَا جَنَّةُ ٱلْمَأْوَىٰٓ ﴿١٥﴾ إِذْ يَغْشَى ٱلسِّدْرَةَ مَا يَغْشَىٰ ﴿١٦﴾ مَا زَاغَ ٱلْبَصَرُ وَمَا طَغَىٰ ﴿١٧﴾ لَقَدْ رَأَىٰ مِنْ ءَايَٰتِ رَبِّهِ ٱلْكُبْرَىٰٓ ﴾.

Will you then dispute with him [Muḥammad ﷺ] over what he saw. And indeed, he saw him [i.e. Jibrīl (عليه السلام)] in another descent. At the Lotus Tree of the Utmost Boundary. Near it is the Garden of Resort [i.e. Paradise]. When that which covers did cover the lotus tree. The sight [of the Prophet (ﷺ)] did not swerve, nor did it transgress [its limit]. Indeed, he saw of the greatest signs of his Lord. (al-Najm: 12-18).

Allāh mentioned in the above verses those of His great signs He had honoured His Messenger (ﷺ) to view on the night of his ascent. Such as seeing Angel Jibrīl near the Lotus Tree of the Utmost Boundary, and viewing the tree itself being covered with what covered it of Allāh's order, i.e. golden butterflies, according to both Ibn ʿAbbās (رضي الله عنهما) and Masrūq[1].

1- Masrūq is a renowned scholar of the *Tābi'i* generation. (Translator)

Details of the Prophet's ascent to heaven are given in a number of *ḥadīths*, including the aforementioned one narrated by Anas bin Mālik (ﷺ). In addition to what we have quoted earlier from that *ḥadīth* concerning the Prophet's Night Journey, it contains as well an account of what happened during his ascension to heaven. The Prophet (ﷺ) said further,

(ثم عرج بنا إلى السماء فاستفتح جبريل. فقيل: من أنت؟ قال: جبريل. قيل: ومن معك؟ قال: محمد. قيل: وقد بعث إليه؟ قال: قد بعث إليه. ففتح لنا فإذا أنا بآدم فرحب بي ودعا لي بخير. (ثم ذكر عروجه إلى السموات وملاقاته الأنبياء إلى أن قال): ثم ذهب بي إلى سدرة المنتهى وإذا ورقها كآذان الفيلة، وإذا ثمارها كالقلال. قال: فلما غشيها من أمر الله ما غشيها تغيرت. فما أحد من خلق الله يستطيع أن ينعتها من حسنها. فأوحى الله إليّ ما أوحى. ففرض عليّ خمسين صلاة في كل يوم وليلة، فنزلت إلى موسى ﷺ. فقال: ما فرض ربك على أمتك؟ قلت: خمسين صلاة. قال: ارجع إلى ربك فاسأله التخفيف فإن أمتك لا يطيقون ذلك، فإني قد بلوت بني إسرائيل وخبرتهم. قال: فرجعت إلى ربي. فقلت: يا رب خفف على أمتي. فحط عني خمساً. فرجعت إلى موسى. فقلت: حط عني خمساً. قال: إن أمتك لا يطيقون ذلك فارجع إلى ربك فاسأله التخفيف. قال: فلم أزل أرجع بين ربي تبارك وتعالى وبين موسى عليه السلام حتى قال: يا محمد. إنهن خمس صلوات كل يوم وليلة لكل صلاة عشر فذلك خمسون صلاة ...).

We were thereafter lifted up to heaven, where Jibrīl, having demanded that the gate be opened, was asked to say who he was. He said, [I am] Jibrīl. He was also asked, 'Who is with you'? He replied, 'Muḥammad'. After this, Jibrīl was asked, 'Has he [Muḥammad (ﷺ)] been sent to [by Allāh]'?, and he replied in the affirmative. Then, the gate was opened for us and I met Ādam who welcomed me and supplicated for me.

The Prophet (ﷺ) continued to describe his ascent to heaven and how he met other Prophets there, until he said, **"Then, Jibrīl took me to the Lotus Tree of the Utmost Boundary, whose leaves are like the ears of an elephant, while the fruits thereof looked like jars. When the tree became covered with what covered it of Allāh's order, it was then in a different shape; so beautiful that none of Allāh's creation could describe its prettiness. Thereupon, Allāh revealed to me His revelation, and commanded me to perform prayer fifty times a day. I descended until I met Mūsā (ﷺ), who asked me, 'What did your Lord enjoin on your followers'?. I said, 'Fifty prayers'. He remarked, 'Go back to your Lord and beseech Him to reduce the number; your people cannot bear such an obligation. I say this based on my experience with [my people] the Children of Israel'. I returned to my Lord and said, 'O my Lord, reduce [the number of the prayers you have enjoined] on my followers'. He therefore cut the number down to forty-five. I went back to Mūsā and said, 'The number has been reduced by five'. Again, Mūsā said, 'Your people would not be able to comply with such an order. Go back to your Lord and beg for more reduction'. The Prophet (ﷺ) added, "I kept going and coming between my Lord (ﷻ) and Mūsā (ﷺ) [asking for more reduction] until Allāh said, 'O Muḥammad, now they are just five prayers every day and night, but each shall be tenfold [in reward]; making the total [again] fifty prayers'..."** (*Muslim*: 162).

There are other versions of this story, not too different in content, narrated by Mālik bin Ṣa'ṣa'ah, Abū-Dharr and Ibn 'Abbās, and are all recorded in the two *ṣaḥīḥs*[1], as well as other *ḥadīth* compilations.

Important Note:

The Prophet's Night Journey and ascension to heaven are both part of the great signs Allāh used to honour him (ﷺ). Our duty as Muslims is to believe in them as true phenomena, constituting important virtues given exclusively to our Prophet (ﷺ), among all other Messengers of Allāh. However, it is unlawful for any Muslim to commemorate the day of the Night Journey and the Prophet's ascension to heaven (*Isrā'* and *Mi'rāj*). It is similarly illicit to perform special prayers on this occasion, as done today by some Muslim laymen. Rather, such an act amounts to a detestable innovation, which was neither authorized by the Prophet (ﷺ) nor practised by any of our worthy predecessors. Moreover, it is not even the view of any scholar whose example deserves to be followed.

The *Ahl al-Sunnah* scholars have described the so-called special prayer on the eve of Rajab 27th and the likes, as part of the heresies added to Allāh's religion. They further declared it an unlawful act in the opinion of all the leading Muslim scholars. Hence, none but an ignorant heretic would introduce such a practice. The Messenger (ﷺ) has said,

1- i.e. the books of *Bukhārī* and *Muslim*. (Translator)

(من أحدث في أمرنا هذا ما ليس منه فهو ردّ).

Whoever invents in this religion of ours something alien to it, such an innovation shall be handed back to him [i.e. rejected]. (*Muslim*: 2697).

3.9 The truth about the life of the Prophets (عليهم السلام):

It has been confirmed in many Islamic proofs that all the Prophets of Allāh, with the exception of some, have died. The exception we referred to above is also based on some other proofs. 'Īsa (Jesus) (ﷺ), for instance, did not die, but was raised up alive to Allāh in heaven, as we shall later explain.

Proofs concerning the demise of Allāh's Prophets include the following:

Allāh (ﷻ) says,

﴿ أَمْ كُنتُمْ شُهَدَآءَ إِذْ حَضَرَ يَعْقُوبَ ٱلْمَوْتُ ﴾.

Or were you present when death approached Ya'qūb [Jacob]. (al-Baqarah: 133).

﴿ وَلَقَدْ جَآءَكُمْ يُوسُفُ مِن قَبْلُ بِٱلْبَيِّنَٰتِ فَمَا زِلْتُمْ فِى شَكٍّ مِّمَّا جَآءَكُم بِهِۦ ۖ حَتَّىٰٓ إِذَا هَلَكَ قُلْتُمْ لَن يَبْعَثَ ٱللَّهُ مِنۢ بَعْدِهِۦ رَسُولًا ﴾.

And Yūsuf [Joseph] had already come to you before with clear proofs, but you remained in doubt concerning what he brought to you, until when he died, you said, 'Never will Allāh send a Messenger after him'. (Ghāfir: 34).

He also said of His Prophet, Sulaiman (ﷺ),

﴿ فَلَمَّا قَضَيْنَا عَلَيْهِ ٱلْمَوْتَ مَا دَلَّهُمْ عَلَىٰ مَوْتِهِۦٓ إِلَّا دَآبَّةُ ٱلْأَرْضِ تَأْكُلُ مِنسَأَتَهُۥ ﴾.

And when We decreed for him death, nothing indicated to them his death except a creature of the earth[1] eating his staff. (Saba': 14).

Similarly, Allāh addressed Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ) saying,

1- i.e. a woodworm or termite. (Translator)

﴿ إِنَّكَ مَيِّتٌ وَإِنَّهُم مَّيِّتُونَ ﴾.

Indeed, you are to die, and they, certainly, are to die [as well]. (al-Zumar: 30).

Some scholars of the Qur'ānic exegesis see in the above verse a sort of notification for the Prophet (ﷺ) about his death, which was then forthcoming, and for his adherents and antagonists alike, about an inevitable end of their lives. The verse therefore, informed the Companions (ﷺ) that the Prophet (ﷺ) was also bound to die. Moreover, Allāh (ﷻ) has said, in even a more general tone, as He speaks of the death of every created soul,

﴿ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ ذَآئِقَةُ ٱلْمَوْتِ ﴾.

Every soul shall taste death. (Āl-'Imrān: 185).

Thus, the aforementioned verses are proofs to the fact that the Prophets (عليهم السلام) also die, just like all other human beings, except for 'Īsa [Jesus] (ﷺ), of whose accent to Allāh (ﷻ) He has informed us. He says,

﴿ إِذْ قَالَ ٱللَّهُ يَٰعِيسَىٰٓ إِنِّى مُتَوَفِّيكَ وَرَافِعُكَ إِلَىَّ وَمُطَهِّرُكَ مِنَ ٱلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا۟ ﴾.

And [remember] when Allāh said, 'O 'Īsa, indeed I will take you and cause you to ascend to Myself, and I will cleanse you of those who disbelieve'... (Āl-'Imrān: 55).

This verse evidently indicates that Allāh (ﷻ) did raise 'Īsa (ﷺ) body and soul to heaven, and that he had never parted with life. Ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabari, an erudite scholar of the Qur'ānic exegesis has contextually explained the word "الوفاة" used in the verse to mean 'causing him to ascend to Allāh', while majority of other experts in the field hold the view that a more relevant rendering should be 'causing him to sleep'. This latter viewpoint has a similitude in another verse, where Allāh (ﷻ) says,

﴿ ٱللَّهُ يَتَوَفَّى ٱلْأَنفُسَ حِينَ مَوْتِهَا وَٱلَّتِى لَمْ تَمُتْ فِى مَنَامِهَا ﴾.

Allāh takes away the souls at the time of their death, and those that have not [yet] died, [He takes] during their sleep. (al-Zumar: 42).

It is therefore incontestable that 'Īsa (Jesus) (ﷺ) is alive now in the heaven, even though Allāh has informed us of the subsequent death, which is bound to seize him too before the Hour of Resurrection. He says,

﴿ وَإِن مِّنْ أَهْلِ ٱلْكِتَٰبِ إِلَّا لَيُؤْمِنَنَّ بِهِۦ قَبْلَ مَوْتِهِۦ ۖ وَيَوْمَ ٱلْقِيَٰمَةِ يَكُونُ عَلَيْهِمْ شَهِيدًا ﴾.

And there is none of the People of the Book [Jews and Christians] but that he will surely believe in him[1] **[i.e. 'Īsa - Jesus] before his death. And on the Day of Resurrection he will be, against them, a witness.** (al-Nisā': 159).

The phrase "his death" in the above verse refers to that of 'Isa (Jesus) (ﷺ) after his return to earth at the End of Time, when he shall break the cross, kill all pigs and abolish the *Jizyah*[2]. These are all proved in those authentic *ḥadīths* that mention Prophet 'Īsa's (Jesus) return to earth at the End of Time, as recorded either in the two *ṣaḥīḥ* compilations or other *ḥadīth* literatures.

It is also believed in some Muslim academic quarters that Prophet Idrīs (Enoch) has never breathed his last, but, like Jesus (عليهما السلام), was caused by Allāh to ascend to Himself. Subscribers to this view cite the following Qur'ānic verse as a piece of evidence:

1- i.e. as a servant of Allāh and His blessed Messenger, and as a human being; not lord or son of the Lord. (Translator)

2- *Jizyah* is the money payable by certain categories of the non-Muslims in a Muslim state, or under the protection of the Muslim government. Jesus's abolition of the *Jizyah* is necessary, as no one by then would have any excuse to remain an unbeliever. (Translator)

﴿ وَٱذۡكُرۡ فِي ٱلۡكِتَٰبِ إِدۡرِيسَۚ إِنَّهُۥ كَانَ صِدِّيقٗا نَّبِيّٗا ٥٦ وَرَفَعۡنَٰهُ مَكَانًا عَلِيًّا ﴾.

And mention in the Book, Idrīs (Enoch). Indeed, he was a man of truth and a Prophet. And We raised him to a high station. (Maryam: 56 ,57).

Mujāhid, a well-known Muslim scholar said, "Idrīs was raised up just as 'Īsa was also raised up, and had never died". However, in the opinion of Ibn 'Abbās (رضي الله عنهما), "He was raised up to heaven, where he [later] died". Some also claim that he was raised to the Fourth Heaven; the exact knowledge of this belongs to Allāh alone. Nevertheless, the point we intend to make here is that Muslim scholars have different views regarding the death of Prophet Idrīs (ﷺ), but one certain thing is, had he not really died before, a day must certainly come when he too will breath his last. The proof to this is a saying by Allāh (ﷻ) that,

﴿ كُلُّ نَفۡسٖ ذَآئِقَةُ ٱلۡمَوۡتِۗ ﴾.

Every soul must have a taste of death. (Āl-'Imrān: 185).

Apart from Prophets 'Īsa and Idrīs, no one of the other Messengers has an unceasing existence. This has been the view of all responsible Muslim scholars, and the above-mentioned proofs as well as the visible fact show that they all died in reality.

The religious texts in this connection contain certain expressions whose understanding proves difficult to some people. An example of this is what we read in those *ḥadīths* narrating the Prophet's ascension to heaven, that the Prophet (ﷺ) saw some other Messengers of Allāh and even had dialogues with them. This has come in a *ḥadīth* transmitted by both Bukhāri and Muslim on the authority of Anas bin Mālik (رضي الله عنه), who quoted the Prophet (ﷺ) as saying,

(ثم عرج بنا إلى السماء فاستفتح جبريل فقيل: من أنت؟ قال جبريل. قيل: ومن معك؟ قال: محمد. قيل: وقد بعث إليه. قال: قد بعث إليه، ففتح لنا. فإذا أنا بآدم، فرحب بي ودعا لي بخير، ثم عرج بنا إلى السماء الثانية فاستفتح جبريل عليه السلام فقيل: من أنت؟ قال جبريل. قيل: ومن معك؟ قال: محمد. قيل: وقد بعث إليه.. قال: قد بعث إليه، ففتح لنا. فإذا أنا بابني الخالة عيسى ابن مريم ويحيى بن زكريا صلوات الله عليهما. فرحبا بي ودعوا لي بخير).

We were thereafter lifted up to heaven, where Jibrīl, having demanded that the gate be opened, was asked to say who he was. He said, [I am] Jibrīl. He was also asked, 'Who is with you'? He replied, 'Muḥammad'. After this, Jibrīl was asked, 'Has he [Muḥammad (ﷺ)] been sent to [by Allāh]'?, and he replied in the affirmative. Then, the gate was opened for us and I met Ādam who welcomed me and supplicated for me. After this we were to ascend to the second heaven, where Jibrīl also asked permission to enter. Again, he was asked who he was, and he said, 'Jibrīl'. Then, he was asked, 'Who is with you?', and he replied, 'Muḥammad'. It was said, 'Has he been sent to'? Jibrīl said, '[Yes] he has been sent to'. Then, the gate was opened for us and I saw there the two cousins [of each other], 'Īsa Ibn Maryam [i.e. Jesus the son of Mary], and Yaḥyā [i.e. John] the son of Zakariyyā -May the blessings of Allāh be upon all of them. They both welcomed me and prayed for me. (*Bukhārī*: 3570; *Muslim*: 162).

The *ḥadīth* continued to narrate how the Prophet (ﷺ) met, in the third heaven, Prophet Yūsuf (Joseph) (ﷺ) who was given half the beauty of the whole mankind. He also saw Prophets Idrīs, Hārūn and Mūsa in the fourth, fifth and sixth heavens respectively, while in the seventh

heaven he saw Ibrāhīm (ﷺ) resting, with his back on the *Bait Ma'mūr*[1]. The Prophet (ﷺ) added that all of those Messengers he met received him hospitably and prayed for him.

Yet, Ibn 'Abbās (رضي الله عنهما) also narrated, according to both Bukhāri and Muslim's account, that the Prophet (ﷺ) said,

(رأيت ليلة أسري بي موسى رجلا آدم طُوالا كأنه من رجال شنوءة، ورأيت عيسى رجلا مربوعاً مربوع الخلق إلى الحمرة والبياض سبط الرأس...).

On the night of my Night Journey, I saw Mūsa; a tall, brown-coloured man, as if he was one of the men of the *Shanūah*[2] clan. I also saw 'Īsa (Jesus), who was a man of medium height and moderate complexion; inclined to the red and white colours, and was of lank hair. (*Bukhāri*: 3239; *Muslim*: 165).

Some people erroneously see in these and other similar texts reasonable grounds for their claim of permanent existence for the Prophets. However, the truth is that every Prophet of Allāh has lived and died, except fro the two known cases of 'Īsa (Jesus) -whose existence up till now is well confirmed in the religious texts- and Idrīs, whose existence now is still a controversial matter. Yet, as far as other Messengers and Prophets are concerned, there are proofs indicating, with all certainty, that they are all dead. We have mentioned some of these proofs already.

1- i.e. the Frequented House in the heavens. (Translator)

2- *Shanūah* is the name of a clan in Yemen. Members of this clan are usually tall and thin. See: *Fatḥu al-Bāri vol. vi, pp. 429, 485; Sarḥu Nawawi 'ala Muslim vol. ii, p.226.* (Translator)

That the Prophet (ﷺ) did see the Messengers who came before him on the night of his ascent to heaven is likewise an incontestable fact, which in no sense contradicts the import of other authentic proofs. What he saw that night were the souls (spirits) of those Messengers depicted in what used to be their physical appearances. Their bodies -except where otherwise stated[1]- are, in reality on the earth in their respective graves. This is the view being held by the leading scholars of *Ahl al-Sunnah* (The Orthodox Sunni Muslims). One of those celebrated scholars has said in this respect, "Concerning his seeing other Prophets on the night of his ascent to heaven, where he saw Ādam in the nearest heaven, Yaḥya and 'Īsa in the second heaven, Yūsuf in the third and Idris in the fourth. He also saw Hārūn in the fifth heaven, Mūsa in the sixth, and finally he caught sight of Ibrāhīm while in the seventh heaven, or perhaps in a reverse order. What he saw actually were their souls (spirits) portrayed in the forms of their bodies. Some people have suggested that perhaps the Prophet (ﷺ) saw the same bodies of those Messengers, which had been buried in their graves. This is, however, a very weak proposition. Nevertheless, 'Īsa (ﷺ) did ascend to heaven with both his body and soul, and the same thing is being said of Idrīs, too. As for Ibrāhīm, Mūsa and others, they are on this earth, buried in their respective graves.

1- As in the case of 'Īsa (Jesus ﷺ) who was caused to ascend to heaven with his body and soul. (Translator)

It is important to add here that, just as Allāh (ﷻ) has honoured His Messengers by causing their souls to ascend to heavens, where they (i.e. the souls) now live in luxury as Allāh may wish, He has also preserved their bodies which remain on the earth, inside their graves. Thus, the earth has no decomposing effect on their bodies, as this has been authoritatively reported in a narration by Aws bin Aws (ﷺ) who quoted the Prophet (ﷺ) as saying,

(إن من أفضل أيامكم يوم الجمعة، فأكثروا علي من الصلاة فيه، فإن صلاتكم معروضة عليّ). فقالوا: يا رسول الله. وكيف تعرض صلاتنا عليك وقد أرمْتَ؟ قال: يقول: بَلِيتَ. قال: (إن الله عز وجل حرّم على الأرض أجساد الأنبياء).

Indeed, Friday is one of the best days you have. Therefore, invoke on me as much as blessings you could on that day, for your invocation of blessings shall be displayed for me. The audience then said, 'O Allāh's Messenger, how could our invocations be displayed for you after your body might have been decomposed'? He replied (ﷺ), **"Indeed, Allāh (ﷻ) has barred the earth from [touching] the bodies of [His] Prophets".** (*Musnad Aḥmad* vol. iv, p.viii; *Sunan Abū Dawūd* vol. i, p. 443 *ḥadīth* no: 1047; *Sunan Dārimi* vol. i, p. 307 *ḥadīth* no: 1580[1]).

From the foregoing, the truth regarding this important issue has become clear, and so has the nature of the belief a Muslim must hold in this respect. Allāh (ﷻ) knows best.

1- The chain of transmission is authentic, according to Imam Nawawi.

3.10 The Prophets' miracles compared to the *karāmahs*[1] of the righteous believers

Definition:

The word '*mu'jizah*' (i.e. miracle) is derived from ' '*ajz*', which means powerlessness. *Al-Qāmūs al-Muḥīṭ*, the famous Arabic dictionary says accordingly, "The Prophet's miracle is anything he has used to render his opponents ineffective at the point of provocation. Linguistically, the Arabic word '*mu'jizah*' ends with letter 'h', which has been purposely added for mere intensiveness".

In technical terms, '*mu'jizah*' is a supernatural phenomenon that happens at the hands of Allāh's Prophets as a proof of their truthfulness, and survives any attempts to disprove it.

An analysis of the above stated definition would show that any natural or conventional thing is not covered by this definition, even though it may also happen at the hands of the Prophets. On the same account, any supernatural action or phenomenon performed by a non-Prophet cannot be classified as '*mu'jizah*'; hence, such acts by the *Awliyā'* (righteous or devoted believers) are called *karāmah*, as the *Awliyā'* themselves are subordinates of the Prophets. In addition, and even with all the more reason, what magicians and fortune-tellers practise of sorcery and the like, should also be excluded from the content of the definition; for those magical practices are only perpetrated by the most evil persons. Finally, the last clause in the

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1- *Karāmah* is a miracle performed by any righteous servant of Allāh, other than His Prophets and Messengers. (Translator)

definition, viz. "...*as a proof of their truthfulness, and survives any attempts to disprove it*" has been included with the aim of setting aside claims by impostors and sorcerers of certain supernatural acts, which are normally challenged or refuted by their counterparts.

Examples of miracles performed by the Prophets

Many are the wonders performed by the Prophets. Prophet Ṣāliḥ's people, for instance, asked him to bring forth a she-camel from a rock. They even specified a particular rock for him and gave details of the specifications of that camel they wanted. Ṣāliḥ (عليه السلام) supplicated to Allāh, who, in response, ordered that very rock to split open for a big she-camel, conforming totally to all standards and specifications they had mentioned in their request[1]. Allāh says with reference to this,

﴿ وَإِلَىٰ ثَمُودَ أَخَاهُمْ صَٰلِحًا ۗ قَالَ يَٰقَوْمِ ٱعْبُدُوا۟ ٱللَّهَ مَا لَكُم مِّنْ إِلَٰهٍ غَيْرُهُۥ ۖ قَدْ جَآءَتْكُم بَيِّنَةٌ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ ۖ هَٰذِهِۦ نَاقَةُ ٱللَّهِ لَكُمْ ءَايَةً ۖ فَذَرُوهَا تَأْكُلْ فِىٓ أَرْضِ ٱللَّهِ ۖ وَلَا تَمَسُّوهَا بِسُوٓءٍ فَيَأْخُذَكُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ﴾

And to *Thamūd* [We sent] their brother Ṣāliḥ. He said, O my people, worship Allāh; you have no god worthy of worship other than Him. There has come to you clear evidence from your Lord. This is the she-camel of Allāh[2] [sent] to you as a sign. So leave her to graze in Allāh's land, and do not touch her with harm, lest there seize you a painful punishment. (al-A'rāf: 73).

1- Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr vol.* iii, p. 436.

2- i.e. created by Allāh. (Translator)

The miracles given to Ibrāhīm (عليه السلام) included the fire his people had kindled to punish him and to get rid of him, but was turned into coolness and a means of safety for Ibrāhīm (عليه السلام) when he was thrown into it. Allāh says,

﴿ قَالُوا۟ حَرِّقُوهُ وَٱنصُرُوٓا۟ ءَالِهَتَكُمْ إِن كُنتُمْ فَٰعِلِينَ ﴿٦٨﴾ قُلْنَا يَٰنَارُ كُونِى بَرْدًا وَسَلَٰمًا عَلَىٰٓ إِبْرَٰهِيمَ ﴿٦٩﴾ وَأَرَادُوا۟ بِهِۦ كَيْدًا فَجَعَلْنَٰهُمُ ٱلْأَخْسَرِينَ ﴾.

They said, 'Burn him and support [i.e. take revenge for] your gods- if you are to act'. We [Allāh] said, 'O fire! Be coolness and safety for Ibrāhīm'. And they planned against him, but We made them the worst losers. (al-Anbiyā': 68-70).

Of Mūsa's miracles was the stick, which would transform into a big snake whenever he purposely cast it down. Allāh (ﷻ) says,

﴿ وَمَا تِلْكَ بِيَمِينِكَ يَٰمُوسَىٰ ﴿١٧﴾ قَالَ هِىَ عَصَاىَ أَتَوَكَّؤُا۟ عَلَيْهَا وَأَهُشُّ بِهَا عَلَىٰ غَنَمِى وَلِىَ فِيهَا مَـَٔارِبُ أُخْرَىٰ ﴿١٨﴾ قَالَ أَلْقِهَا يَٰمُوسَىٰ ﴿١٩﴾ فَأَلْقَىٰهَا فَإِذَا هِىَ حَيَّةٌ تَسْعَىٰ ﴿٢٠﴾ قَالَ خُذْهَا وَلَا تَخَفْ سَنُعِيدُهَا سِيرَتَهَا ٱلْأُولَىٰ ﴾.

And what is that in your right hand , O Mūsa? He said, 'It is my stick; I lean upon it, and with it I beat down leaves for my sheep and I find in it other uses'. [Allāh] said, 'Cast it down, O Mūsa'. So he cast it down, and behold! It was a snake, moving quickly. [Allāh] said, 'Grasp it and fear not; We shall return it to its former state'. (Ṭā-Hā: 17-21).

Another miracle given to Mūsa (عليه السلام) was that he used to insert his hand into his shirt, and then pull it out again while the hand would become white, shining like the moon without an indication of any harm or disease. Allāh (ﷻ) says,

﴿ وَٱضْمُمْ يَدَكَ إِلَىٰ جَنَاحِكَ تَخْرُجْ بَيْضَآءَ مِنْ غَيْرِ سُوٓءٍ ءَايَةً أُخْرَىٰ ﴾.

And draw in your hand to your side; it will come out white without disease – being another sign. (Ṭā-Hā: 22).

'Īsa's (Jesus's) miracles included his making, out of clay, figures like birds, which he would then breath into, and would become birds by Allāh's leave. He also used to rub over the born-blind and lepers, who would subsequently become healed of their disabilities by Allāh's permission. Furthermore, he used to call upon dead persons, who would answer him from their graves by Allāh's permission. Allāh (ﷻ) says,

﴿ وَإِذْ تَخْلُقُ مِنَ ٱلطِّينِ كَهَيْـَٔةِ ٱلطَّيْرِ بِإِذْنِى فَتَنفُخُ فِيهَا فَتَكُونُ طَيْرًۢا بِإِذْنِى ۖ وَتُبْرِئُ ٱلْأَكْمَهَ وَٱلْأَبْرَصَ بِإِذْنِى ۖ وَإِذْ تُخْرِجُ ٱلْمَوْتَىٰ بِإِذْنِى ﴾.

And when you made from clay [what was] like the form of a bird with My Permission, then you breathed into it and it became a bird with My Permission; and you healed the blind (from birth) and the leper with My Permission; and when you brought forth the dead with My Permission... (al-Mā'idah: 110).

The Glorious Qur'ān was part of the miracles given to our Prophet (ﷺ), and it is the most magnificent of all the miracles given to the Messengers of Allāh. He says,

﴿ وَإِن كُنتُمْ فِى رَيْبٍ مِّمَّا نَزَّلْنَا عَلَىٰ عَبْدِنَا فَأْتُوا۟ بِسُورَةٍ مِّن مِّثْلِهِۦ وَٱدْعُوا۟ شُهَدَآءَكُم مِّن دُونِ ٱللَّهِ إِن كُنتُمْ صَٰدِقِينَ ﴾.

And if you are in doubt about what We have sent down upon Our servant [i.e. Muḥammad (ﷺ)], then produce a *sūrah* the like thereof and call upon your witnesses other than Allāh, if you should be truthful. (al-Baqarah: 23).

﴿قُل لَّئِنِ اجْتَمَعَتِ الْإِنسُ وَالْجِنُّ عَلَىٰ أَن يَأْتُوا بِمِثْلِ هَٰذَا الْقُرْآنِ لَا يَأْتُونَ بِمِثْلِهِ وَلَوْ كَانَ بَعْضُهُمْ لِبَعْضٍ ظَهِيرًا﴾.

Say, 'If mankind and *jinn* gathered in order to produce the like of this Qur'ān, they could not produce the like thereof, even if they helped one another'. (al-Isrā': 88).

That the moon split in two, upon the request of the people of Makkah, was also a miracle given to the Prophet (ﷺ). The splitting of the moon was witnessed not only by the inhabitants of Makkah, but also by other people elsewhere. Allāh (ﷻ) says,

﴿اقْتَرَبَتِ السَّاعَةُ وَانشَقَّ الْقَمَرُ ۝١ وَإِن يَرَوْا آيَةً يُعْرِضُوا وَيَقُولُوا سِحْرٌ مُّسْتَمِرٌّ﴾.

The Hour [of Judgement and Resurrection] has come near and the moon split. And if they see a sign, they turn away and say, 'Continuing magic'. (al-Qamar: 1, 2).

The Night Journey and the Ascent to Heaven mentioned earlier were likewise miracles given to Muḥammad (ﷺ). Allāh (ﷻ) has said,

﴿سُبْحَانَ الَّذِي أَسْرَىٰ بِعَبْدِهِ لَيْلًا مِّنَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ إِلَى الْمَسْجِدِ الْأَقْصَى﴾.

Glorified is He [Allāh] who took His servant [Muḥammad ﷺ] for a journey by night from the Sacred Mosque [in Makkah] to the Far Distant Mosque [in Jerusalem]. (al-Isrā': 1).

Miracles of Allāh's Messengers are numerous, and most especially those of our Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ), whom Allāh supported with many signs, the like of which has never been given to any of the past Prophets. In fact, we have mentioned here only few examples of the numerous signs and pieces of evidence given to our Prophet (ﷺ).

Al-Karâmah:

Karāmah is a supernatural phenomenon, not associated with a claim to prophet hood, and neither is it considered a premise leading eventually to that. *Karāmah* happens at the hands of a manifestly righteous servant of Allāh, who must be of sound belief and pious acts.

Being an extraordinary development, void of any claim to prophet hood, as defined above, the word '*karāmah*' is applicable to neither conventional events, nor miraculous acts of the Prophets (عليهم السلام). The supernatural development that usually precedes prophet hood, known in Arabic as '*Irhāṣ*' is equally excluded, just as the magic and jugglery of sorcerers and soothsayers are not embodied in the definition.

Different *karāmahs* have been given to many virtuous men or women (Awliyā'), including those of the past nations. For instance, Allāh (ﷻ) said of Maryam (Mary) (عليها السلام),

﴿كُلَّمَا دَخَلَ عَلَيْهَا زَكَرِيَّا ٱلْمِحْرَابَ وَجَدَ عِندَهَا رِزْقًا قَالَ يَٰمَرْيَمُ أَنَّىٰ لَكِ هَٰذَا قَالَتْ هُوَ مِنْ عِندِ ٱللَّهِ﴾.

Each time Zakariyā [Zachariah] entered upon her in the prayer chamber (*miḥrāb*), he found with her provision. He said, 'O Maryam, from where have you got this'? She said, 'It is from Allāh'. (Āl-'Imrān: 37).

Also parallel to this was the story of the People of the Cave, as related in the Noble Qur'ān.

We shall now make mention of some of the righteous persons among this nation of Muḥammad (ﷺ), who have been honoured with one form of *karāmah* or the other.

- **Usaid bin Ḥuḍair** (ؓ) was once reading *surat al-Kahf*[1] when, as a result of his recitation, some angels descended from heaven in the form of a canopy containing lamp-like images.

- **'Imrān bin Ḥuṣain,** whom the angels used to salute.

- **Both Salmān and Abū Dardā'** (رضي الله عنهما) were once eating from a plate, when the plate or the food therein glorified Allāh.

- **Khubaib bin 'Adiyy** (ؓ) was held captive by the Makkan idolaters, as a hostage or prisoner of war, but was found eating grapes at the time there were now grapes at all in the whole city of Makkah.

- **Al-'Alā' al-Ḥaḍrami** (ؓ) and his troops crossed an open sea while riding on the backs of their horses; however, the saddles of those horses were not wet.

-**Abū Muslim al-Khawlāni** (رحمه الله) was taken captive by Al-Aswad al-'Anasi, an impostor who claimed he was a Prophet. He asked al-Khawlāni if he would testify to his alleged prophet hood, but the latter dodged answering the question by simply saying, "I can't hear [you]". He also asked whether al-Khawlāni would bear witness that Muḥammad (ﷺ) was Allāh's Messenger, and he responded this time in the affirmative. So al-'Anasi, the impostor, ordered that his captive (i.e. al-Khawlani) be thrown into a fire. Surprisingly, al-Khawlāni was later found therein performing prayer; the flaming fire had turned into coolness and source of safety for him. There are more stories of this nature in books of history and biography.

1- i.e. chapter 18 of the Noble Qur'ān. (Translator)

The difference between *mu'jizah* (miracle) and *karāmah*:

The difference between the two lies in the miracle's link with prophet hood, while *karāmah*, on the other hand, must be void of it. The holder of a *karamah* deserves it because of his following the Prophet sent to him, and for being upright in accordance with his law. Hence, miracle (*mu'jizah*) belongs to the Prophets, while *karāmah* is for other righteous servants of Allāh. The two, however, are supernatural phenomena.

In the opinion of some leading Muslim scholars, any *karāmah* given to a righteous man or woman must be seen as part of the miracles Allāh has conferred on his/her Prophet; as they could only merit such on account of their compliance with the teachings of their respective Prophets. In other words, any *karāmah* credited to a virtuous person (*waliyy*) must be considered a branch of the miracles conferred on that Messenger, based on whose law he/she has been worshipping Allāh.

It is thus clear that designating a name (i.e. *mu'jizah*) for the supernatural acts of the Prophets, and another (i.e. *karāmah*) for those of other righteous servants of Allāh (*Awliyā'*) is a mere terminological or idiomatic expression, which occurs in neither the Qur'ān nor the *Sunnah*. It is a discretionary deduction by Muslim scholars, based on some textually established facts.

The Islamic ruling concerning the belief in miracle (*mu'jizah*) and *karāmah*:

Believing in the miracles and *karāmah*, given to the Prophets and other righteous servants of Allāh *(Awliyā')* respectively,

constitutes one of the fundamentals of Faith. This is an established fact, backed up with textual evidence from both the Qur'ān and the *Sunnah*; hence, every Muslim is duty-bound to hold this belief and accept it as true. Any contrary stance in this respect amounts to rejection of all available proofs. It also means acting against factual evidence, and seriously deviating from what has been the opinion of erudite Muslim scholars concerning this issue. Allāh (ﷻ) knows best.

3.11 *Al-Waliyy* and *al-Wilāyah* (Righteousness and being righteous) from an Islamic viewpoint

Definition:

Wilāyah, which originally means love and closeness in the Arabic language is considered the opposite of '*'adāwah*' (enmity), whose origins are hatred and discord.

In technical sense, the word '*wilāyah*' stands for "Closeness to Allāh through one's obedience to Him". While '*al-Waliyy*' (the righteous), as an Islamic term, is somebody who combines two important qualities: Faith and piety or dutifulness. Allāh (ﷻ) says,

﴿أَلَآ إِنَّ أَوۡلِيَآءَ ٱللَّهِ لَا خَوۡفٌ عَلَيۡهِمۡ وَلَا هُمۡ يَحۡزَنُونَ ٦٢ ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ وَكَانُواْ يَتَّقُونَ﴾.

Behold! Certainly, for the *Awliyā'*[1] (friends or allies) of Allāh there will be no fear, nor will they grieve. [They are] those who believe and keep their duty [to Allāh]. (Yūnus: 62, 63).

In as much as the allies or friends of Allāh are the pious believers, it follows, logically, that the level of one's closeness or friendship with Allāh is determined based on the degree of his or her faith and piety. Hence, the more committed one is in his faith and his fear for Allāh, the more exceptional becomes his closeness to Him. Therefore, people are not equal in terms of their closeness to Allāh, just as they are at variance regarding their level of commitment, with respect to Faith and piety.

1- *Awliyā'* is the plural form of *waliyy* mentioned above. (Translator)

Generally, Allāh's Prophets are the most superior of all His allies or friends; even though they, themselves, belong to different ranks in the following sequence:

The Messengers (*Rusul*) among them are superior to those who were only Prophets[1], while the *'Ulu al-'azm* (Messengers described by Allāh as men of firm resolution), i.e. Nūḥ, Ibrāhīm, Mūsa, 'Īsa and Muḥammad (صلّى الله عليهم وسلّم) are also superior to all other Messengers. Furthermore, Muḥammad (ﷺ) -as discussed earlier- stands out as the best of all the five *'Ulu al-'azm* Messengers, followed by Ibrāhīm (ﷺ). The question of who is superior to whom among the rest (i.e. Nūḥ, Mūsa and 'Īsa) remains unresolved.

Categories of the *Awliyā'*

Allāh's allies or friends are divisible into two classes, namely 'the Foremost and Nearest to Allāh' and 'the Moderate Companions of the Right Hand'.

Allāh (ﷻ) has spoken of both groups in many places in His Book. He says,

﴿إِذَا وَقَعَتِ ٱلۡوَاقِعَةُ ۝١ لَيۡسَ لِوَقۡعَتِهَا كَاذِبَةٌ ۝٢ خَافِضَةٞ رَّافِعَةٌ ۝٣ إِذَا رُجَّتِ ٱلۡأَرۡضُ رَجّٗا ۝٤ وَبُسَّتِ ٱلۡجِبَالُ بَسّٗا ۝٥ فَكَانَتۡ هَبَآءٗ مُّنۢبَثّٗا ۝٦ وَكُنتُمۡ أَزۡوَٰجٗا ثَلَٰثَةٗ ۝٧ فَأَصۡحَٰبُ ٱلۡمَيۡمَنَةِ مَآ أَصۡحَٰبُ ٱلۡمَيۡمَنَةِ ۝٨ وَأَصۡحَٰبُ ٱلۡمَشۡـَٔمَةِ مَآ أَصۡحَٰبُ ٱلۡمَشۡـَٔمَةِ ۝٩ وَٱلسَّٰبِقُونَ ٱلسَّٰبِقُونَ ۝١٠ أُوْلَٰٓئِكَ ٱلۡمُقَرَّبُونَ ۝١١ فِي جَنَّٰتِ ٱلنَّعِيمِ﴾

When the Event Inevitable occurs. There can be no denial of its occurrence. It will bring down [some] and raise up [others].When

1- See p. 232 for details on the difference between the two terms (Messenger and prophet). (Translator)

the earth will be shaken to its depths. And the mountains will be crumbled, breaking down. Becoming dust dispersing. And you will be [sorted out into] three classes. So the Companions of the Right -how [fortunate] will be the Companions of the Right. And the Companions of the Left- how [unfortunate] will be the Companions of the Left. And the Foremost, the Foremost. Those are the ones brought near [to Allāh]. In the Gardens of Bliss. (al-Wāqi'ah: 1-12).

Thus, Allāh mentioned here three groups: one of them, the Companions of the Left, will be in Hell-fire, while the other two, i.e. the Companions of the Right and the Foremost, the ones brought near to Allāh shall end up in Paradise. Allāh mentions again the two fortunate groups in the close of this chapter (*al-Wāqi'ah*) as He says,

﴿ فَأَمَّآ إِن كَانَ مِنَ ٱلْمُقَرَّبِينَ ﴿٨٨﴾ فَرَوْحٌ وَرَيْحَانٌ وَجَنَّتُ نَعِيمٍ ﴿٨٩﴾ وَأَمَّآ إِن كَانَ مِنْ أَصْحَٰبِ ٱلْيَمِينِ ﴿٩٠﴾ فَسَلَٰمٌ لَّكَ مِنْ أَصْحَٰبِ ٱلْيَمِينِ ﴾.

And if he [i.e. the deceased] was of those brought near [to Allāh]. Then [for him is] rest and bounty and a garden of bliss. And if he was of the Companions of the Right. Then [the angels will say], 'peace for you'; [you are] from the Companions of the Right. (al-Wāqi'ah: 88-91).

The Prophet (ﷺ) further described the deeds of both parties in a famous *qudsi ḥadīth*[1] where the narrator, Abū Hurairah (ﷺ), quoted the Prophet (ﷺ) as saying,

1- See the glossary for its definition.

(إن الله تعالى قال: من عادى لي ولياً فقد آذنته بالحرب، وما تقرب إليّ عبدي بشيء أحب إليّ مما افترضت عليه، وما يزال عبدي يتقرب إليّ بالنوافل حتى أحبه فإذا أحببته كنت سمعه الذي يسمع به، وبصره الذي يبصر به، ويده التي يبطش بها، ورجله التي يمشي بهـــا، وإن سألني لأعطينه ولئن استعاذني لأعيذنه).

Allāh (ﷻ) said, 'Whoever shows enmity towards a friend or ally of Mine- I shall be at war with him. The best thing, which My servant may use to get closer to Me is the [religious] obligation that I have enjoined on him. And My servant shall continue to draw near to Me with supererogatory acts until I love him. When I love him, I am his hearing with which he hears, his sight with which he sees, his hand with which he strikes and his foot with which he walks. If he were to request anything from Me, I would surely give him, and were he to seek refuge in Me, I would certainly grant him that [i.e. protect him]'. (*Bukhāri*: 6502).

The righteous, the Companions of the Right, are those who take the religious obligations as means of approach to Allāh (ﷻ). They do what Allāh has enjoined on them and abstain from what He has forbidden them to do. However, they bother neither to perform recommended (non-obligatory) acts nor to renounce unnecessary permissible actions.

As for the Foremost, those who are brought near to Allāh, they worship Allāh with supererogatory acts, in addition to the obligatory ones. Thus, they perform both the mandatory and the recommended deeds, and desist not only from the prohibited ones, but from even the blameworthy as well. Having drawn themselves close to Allāh by worshipping Him with all they could afford of their beloved things,

Allāh (ﷻ), in return for that, loved them deeply and prevented them from committing sins. He also answered their prayer, and this has all been expressed in the above quoted *ḥadīth*, **"And My servant shall continue to draw near to Me with supererogatory acts until I love him"...**

The righteous servants of Allāh or His allies (the *Awliyā'*) neither choose for themselves any special dress nor stick to a peculiar outward appearance.

Based on what has been authoritatively affirmed by conversant scholars among the *Ahl al-Sunnah* (The Orthodox Sunni Muslims), the true righteous men or women do not single themselves out with either a particular clothing or a peculiar outward appearance. A leading Muslim scholar who has written on this topic puts it in the following way:

Allāh's allies or friends have no external distinctive mark of whatever is declared permissible in Islam. They do not wear a particular dress and avoid another, if wearing both is permissible. Neither do they distinguish themselves by having their hair shaved, cut short or braided, in as much as all are permissible. An adage has it that 'Many a *ṣiddīq* (veracious person) found in suits[1], and many a *zindīq* (atheist or heretic) found in cloaks[2]'. Rather, Allāh's allies may come from any category of the followers of Muḥammad (ﷺ), with the

1- Or any other outer garment having no religious significance.

2- i.e. any kind of dress signifying religious importance.

exception of anyone known for heresy or immorality. A righteous servant of Allāh and His ally (*waliyy*) may, therefore, be found among the scholars or expert reciters of the Noble Qur'ān. He may also come from among those who fight in the cause of Allāh, as he may even belong to the trading, agricultural or industrial class.

Any excessive belief held with respect to Allāh's allies or friends (*Awliyā'*) is null and void.

The righteous servants of Allāh are all fallible. They do not know the unseen, nor have the power to dispose of anything concerning either the creation or the sustenance. Furthermore, they never invite people to exalt them or give them part of their wealth or certain gifts. Anybody found perpetrating one or more of what we have mentioned above is an impostor; a liar who is rather an ally of the Devil, not of Allāh (ﷻ). Allāh knows best.

Chapter Four: Believing in the Last Day

4.1 Portents of the Day of Resurrection and their types.

4.2 The bliss and punishment of the grave.

4.2.1 Believing in the bliss and punishment of the grave and the proofs establishing this.

4.2.2 The two (i.e. bliss and punishment) of the grave are applicable to both the soul and the body.

4.2.3 Believing in the two angels, (Munkar and Nakīr).

4.3 Believing in the Resurrection.

4.3.1 The real meaning of 'resurrection'.

4.3.2 Proofs establishing the Resurrection from the Glorious Qur'ān, the *Sunnah* and reason.

4.3.3 The final gathering.

4.3.4 Description of the heavenly cistern (*Al-Ḥawḍ*) and the proofs concerning it.

4.3.5 The heavenly scales (*Al-Mīzān*): Features and proofs.

4.3.6 Intercession (*Al-Shafā'ah*): Definition, types and proofs.

4.3.7 The heavenly bridge (*Al-Ṣirāṭ*): Features and proofs.

4.3.8 Description of Paradise and Hell-fire, as well as how to believe in both, and the proofs regarding that.

4.1 Portents of the Day of Resurrection (*Ashrāṭ al-Sā'ah*) and their types.

Definition:

Ashrāṭ is the plural form of *'sharaṭ'*, meaning sign or portent. In the opinion of some linguists, the word may also indicate the outset of an event. However, the author of *Lisān al-'Arab*, a famous Arabic lexicon, added that both derivations are closely related; for the portent of an object or event is likewise its beginning.

The word "*sā'ah*" in Arabic denotes a period of time, but is widely used particularly in reference to the Resurrection. Allāh (ﷻ) says,

﴿ وَعِندَهُۥ عِلْمُ ٱلسَّاعَةِ ﴾.

With Him is the knowledge of the Hour [i.e. of the Resurrection]. (al-Zukhruf: 85).

Sā'ah is one of the most famous names for the Resurrection, both in religious texts and in the ordinary speech of men. The reason for such a designation has links with the nature of the event itself (the Day of Resurrection) which will be sudden and take people by surprise at a given period of time.

Portents of the Hour of Resurrection are signs and indicative events bound to take place before the coming of the Hour itself. Allāh (ﷻ) says,

﴿ فَهَلْ يَنظُرُونَ إِلَّا السَّاعَةَ أَن تَأْتِيَهُم بَغْتَةً ۖ فَقَدْ جَاءَ أَشْرَاطُهَا ﴾.

Then do they await [anything] except that the Hour should come upon them suddenly? But already there have come [some of] its indications. (Muḥammad: 18).

Types of the portents of the Hour

These portents can be divided into three categories as follows:

1- **Remote or distant signs**. That is those portents which had come to pass and subsequently become part of history. The mission of our Prophet (ﷺ) is considered one of these portents, pursuant to what Anas bin Mālik (ﷺ) narrated, quoting the Prophet (ﷺ) himself as saying,

(بعثت أنا والساعة كهاتين).

The Last Hour and me being sent (with the divine message) were like these two (He described this by joining both his forefinger and middle one). (*Bukhāri*: 6504; *Muslim*: 2951).

The splitting of the moon also belongs to this class. Allāh (ﷻ) has said concerning this,

﴿اقْتَرَبَتِ السَّاعَةُ وَانشَقَّ الْقَمَرُ ﴾.

The Hour [of judgement and resurrection] has come near and the moon split. (al-Qamar: 1).

Also embodied here is the event of a fire that was to come out from *Ḥijāz*[1] and shed light on the necks of camels in far away *Buṣrā*[2]. Abū Hurairah (ﷺ) narrated that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said,

1- In Western Arabia. (Translator)

2- A village near Damascus. (Translator)

(لا تقوم الساعة حتى تخرج نار من أرض الحجاز تضيء أعناق الإبل ببصرى).

The Hour will not come to pass until a fire comes out of the land of *Ḥijāz*, which shall throw light on the necks of camels in *Buṣrā*. (*Bukhāri*: 7118; *Muslim*: 2902).

And just exactly as the Prophet (ﷺ) had declared, the said fire came out in the beginning of *Jumāda al-Ākhirah*, 654 A.H. The fire, which had broken out in the eastern part of Madinah, led to flood-like glows of fire, and created much panic for the people. As mentioned in the above quoted *ḥadīth*, the light coming from this fire was seen by the people in far away *Syria*[1], as the inhabitants of *Buṣra* village over there saw in it the necks of their camels.

2- **Intermediate signs.** That is those portents which have occurred in the past and did not stop, but are, rather, constantly on the increase. There are many portents of this kind, which include seeing a slave-girl who will give birth to her mistress[2], and the barefooted, unclothed shepherds competing with one another in building high-rise edifices. The earlier mentioned *ḥadīth* of Jibrīl reads -in part- as follows:

(... قال: فأخبرني عن الساعة؟ قال: ما المسؤول عنها بأعلم من السائل. قال: فأخبرني عن أماراتها، قال: أن تلد الأمة ربتها، وأن ترى الحفاة العراة العالة رعاء الشاء يتطاولون في البنيان).

1- i.e. the old (historic) *Syria* (الشام), which comprised the present-day states of Syria, Lebanon, Jordan and Palestine. (Translator)

2- The indication here is that any offspring resulting from intercourse between a man and his slave-girl or woman is, more or less, regarded a master for the mother, who –being a slave– is counted among her master's property. As it is well known, a man's property eventually gets to his children.

He (Jibrīl) said, 'Tell me about the Hour[1]**', and the Prophet's response was, 'Who is being asked this question does not know more than the questioner himself'. Then he said, 'Tell me then about its signs'. The Prophet (ﷺ) said, 'That a slave-girl will give birth to her mistress, and that you will see barefooted, unclothed, destitute shepherds vying with one another in the construction of magnificent houses'.** (*Muslim*: 8).

Also inclusive here is the emergence of thirty impostors, who shall all claim to be Prophets. According to Abū Hurairah (ﷺ), the Prophet (ﷺ) has said,

(لا تقوم الساعة حتى يبعث دجالون كذابون قريباً من ثلاثين كلهم يزعم أنه رسول الله).

The Hour [of Resurrection] will never come to pass until nearly thirty liars emerge, alleging that they are Messengers sent by Allāh. (*Bukhārī*: 3609).

Another narration by Thawbān (ﷺ) has it that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said,

(وإنه سيكون في أمتي ثلاثون كذابون كلهم يزعم أنه نبي، وأنا خاتم النبيين لا نبي بعدي).

And there shall be of my nation [i.e. followers] thirty impostors, who will all claim to be Prophets. I am the final Prophet; no other Prophet shall come after me. (*Sunan Abū Dawūd*: 4252; *Sunan Tirmidhī*: 2219[2]).

Another portent of this category is the mountain of gold, which shall be uncovered by the River Euphrates, and what will follow that

1- i.e. the last day of the world.

2- This is a "*ḥasan-ṣaḥīḥ*" *ḥadīth*, according to Tirmidhī.

of people's fighting over the treasure. Abū Hurairah (ﷺ) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said,

(لا تقوم الساعة حتى يحسر الفرات عن جبل من ذهب يقتتل الناس عليه، فيقتل من كل مائة تسعة وتسعون ويقول كل رجل منهم لعلّي أكون أنا الذي أنجو).

The Hour [of Resurrection] will not be established until the River Euphrates uncovers a mountain of gold beneath it. A [fierce] combat over the treasure shall erupt between the people, leaving ninety-nine out of every one hundred [combatants] dead, while every one of them would have said, 'Perhaps I shall be the one who will survive'. (*Muslim*: 2894[1]). This portent has not yet happened.

3- **Major signs.** These are portents that will immediately precede the coming of the Hour itself. These signs are ten in nmber, none of which has taken place yet. According to a report by Muslim in his *ḥadīth* compilation, Ḥudhaifah bin Asīd (ﷺ) narrated as follows,

(اطلع النبي ﷺ علينا ونحن نتذاكر، فقال: ما تذاكرون؟ قالوا: نذكر الساعة. قال: إنها لن تقوم حتى تروا قبلها عشر آيات: فذكر الدخان والدجال، والدابة، وطلوع الشمس من مغربها، ونزول عيسى ابن مريم ﷺ، ويأجوج ومأجوج، وثلاثة خسوف: خسف بالمشرق وخسف بالمغرب وخسف بجزيرة العرب، وآخر ذلك نار تخرج من اليمن تطرد الناس إلى محشرهم).

The Prophet (ﷺ) came to us all of a sudden as we were busy in a discussion. He said, **'Concerning what are you discussing'?** We replied, 'We are discussing the Hour [of Resurrection]'. Then he said,

1- A similar narration occurs in both *Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī*: 7119 and *Musnad Aḥmad*, vol. ii, p. 261.

'It will not come to pass until you see ten signs preceding it'. He then mentioned **the Smoke, the Antichrist (*Dajjāl*), the Beast, rising of the sun from the west, 'Īsā ibn Maryam (Jesus the son of Mary)'s descent [from heaven], the Gog and Magog and cave-in of the earth in three different locations; one in the east, one in the west and one in the Arabian peninsula. The last of these portents is a fire that will come forth from Yemen, and shall drive people to their place of assembly.** (*Muslim*: 2901).

In some other *ḥadīths*, the Prophet (ﷺ) mentioned *Al-Mahdi*, demolition of the *Ka'bah* (The Sacred house in Makkah), and the Noble Qur'ān being lifted from the earth. We shall later quote the *ḥadīths* relating to all of these.

Majority of Muslim scholars, especially those with high academic standing, believe that the ten major portents of the Hour are the three we have just mentioned, as well as those mentioned in the above quoted *ḥadīth* of Ḥudhaifah bin Asīd. The only exception is the cave-ins, which were also mentioned in the same *ḥadīth*. The cave-ins, no doubt, form part of the portents, but will happen before the major ten. Hence, they are more of a preamble for them. This opinion enjoys the support of what we have in another version of this same *ḥadīth* by Ḥudhaifah bin Asid, also reported by Muslim. Here the cave-ins were mentioned ahead of any other portents. The *ḥadīth* reads thus,

((إن الساعة لا تكون حتى تكون عشر آيات خسف بالمشرق وخسف بالمغرب وخسف في جزيرة العرب والدخان والدجال...)).

The Hour will not come to pass until there come ten signs: a cave-in in the east, another one in the west, and a third one in the Arabian

peninsula, the Smoke, the Antichrist... Then he mentioned the remaining portents. (*Muslim:* 2901).

Qurtubi, a well-known Muslim scholar, remarked saying, "Based on what we have in this version of the *ḥadīth*, the first of these signs would be the three cave-ins. Some of the signs have occurred during the time of the Prophet (ﷺ), as pointed out by Ibn Wahb"...

In the coming pages, we shall give details concerning the ten major portents, as well as the proofs thereof.

a) The coming of *Al-Mahdi*

Al-Mahdi is a man from among the family of the Prophet (ﷺ); a descendant of Ḥasan bin 'Ali [the Prophet (ﷺ)'s grandson], who will come and fill the earth with justice and equity, as it would have been filled before him with injustice and oppression. Both Mahdi's name and that of his father will be exactly as that of the Prophet (ﷺ) and his father (i.e. Muḥammad bin 'Abdullah). Abū Dawud and Tirmidhi narrated on the authority of 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd (ﷺ) that the Messenger (ﷺ) said,

(لا تذهب الدنيا حتى يملك العرب رجل من أهل بيتي يواطئ اسمه اسمي واسم أبيه اسم أبي، يملأ الأرض عدلاً وقسطاً كما ملئت جوراً وظلماً).

The world shall not come to an end until a man from my family rules over the Arabs. His name will be the same as mine, while his father's name will also be as my father's name. He will fill the land [i.e. the world] with justice and equity, as it was filled with tyranny and injustice. (*Sunan Abū Dawūd* vol. iv, p.306, *ḥadīth* no 4282; *Sunan Tirmidhi* vol. iv, p. 505, *ḥadīth* no. 2230[1]).

1- The *ḥadīth* as quoted above was taken from *Sunan Abū Dawūd*. Tirmidhi, on his part, classified it as a "*ḥasan-ṣaḥīḥ*" *ḥadīth*.

b) The emergence of the Antichrist (*al-Masīḥ al-Dajjāl*):

Al-Masīḥ al-Dajjāl is a human being who will appear at the End of Time, with a wide range of temptations for many of Allāh's creation. Allāh will cause some supernatural acts to happen through him, and he shall claim to be the Lord. His false claim will never entice a true believer, even though he will have unrestricted access to every city in the world save Makkah and Madinah. He shall have with him a fire and a paradise, although his purported fire is, in reality, paradise, while his so-called paradise is, in fact, a fire. Many authentic *ḥadīths* of the Prophet (ﷺ) have spoken of the coming of the Antichrist, including the one transmitted by Muslim in his *ṣaḥīḥ* compilation, on the authority of 'Abdullah bin 'Amr bin al-'Ās (رضي الله عنهما), who quoted the Prophet (ﷺ) as saying,

(يخرج الدجال في أمتي فيمكث اربعين لا أدري أربعين يوماً أو أربعين شهراً أو اربعين عاماً فيبعث الله عيسى ابن مريم كأنه عروة بن مسعود فيطلبه فيهلكه ...).

The Antichrist (*Dajjāl*) will appear in my nation and shall stay for forty, I cannot say whether he meant forty days, forty months or forty years. **Then Allāh will send 'Īsa ibn Maryam (Jesus the son of Mary), resembling 'Urwah bin Mas'ūd**[1]**, who will chase him (the Antichrist) and kill him ...** (*Muslim*: 2940).

In another *ḥadīth* transmitted by both Bukhāri and Muslim, 'Abdullah bin 'Umar (رضي الله عنهما) said, Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) once stood among the people and praised Allāh in a manner He deserves. He then spoke of the Antichrist saying,

1- One of the Prophet's Companions.

(إني أنذركموه وما من نبي إلا قد أنذره قومه لقد أنذره نوح قومه ولكن سأقول لكم فيــه قولاً لم يقله نبي لقومه تعلمون أنه أعور، وأن الله ليس بأعور).

I forewarn you about him. There was never a Prophet before, except that he had warned his people of him [i.e. the Antichrist]. Nūḥ had warned his people of him. However, I shall tell you concerning him something no Prophet has ever told his people; you should know that he is one-eyed, whereas Allāh is, certainly, not. (*Bukhārī*: 3057, *Muslim*: 169[1]).

c) 'Īsa bin Maryam (Jesus)'s descent from heaven

He shall descend to the earth as a fair ruler, and will break the cross, kill pigs and slay the Antichrist. There are proofs from both the Qur'ān and the *Sunnah* on this. Allāh (ﷻ) says,

﴿وَإِنَّهُۥ لَعِلْمٌ لِّلسَّاعَةِ﴾.

And he [Jesus] will be a known sign for [the coming of] the Hour. (al-Zukhruf: 61).

Many of the Qur'ān expositors have seen in the above verse an indication to Jesus's descent from heaven. According to a report in the *Musnad Aḥmad*, subscribers to this view include Ibn 'Abbās (رضي الله عنهما), who said while explaining the verse, "It implies the coming of 'Īsa ibn Maryam (Jesus ﷺ) before the Day of Resurrection[2]".

1- The text of the *ḥadīth* as quoted above is from the latter.

2- *Musnad Aḥmad* vol. i, p. 318.

There are also many authentic *ḥadīths* on this, including the one narrated by Abū Hurairah (ﷺ), who quoted the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) as saying,

(والذي نفسي بيده ليوشكن أن ينـــزل فيكم ابن مريم حكماً عدلا فيكسر الصليب ويقتل الخنـــزير، ويضع الجزية ويفيض المال حتى لا يقبله أحد، حتى تكون السجدة الواحدة خيراً من الدنيا وما فيها).

By Him in whose Hand is my soul, [‘Īsa - Jesus] the son of Mary will shortly descend among you as a just ruler, and shall destroy the cross, kill pigs and abolish the *jizyah*[1]. Then, there will be abundance of wealth, that nobody will like to accept it, and a single *sajdah* [i.e. a prostration or prayer] would be more rewarding than the whole world and whatever is therein. (*Bukhāri*: 2222; *Muslim*: 155[2]).

d) The emergence of Gog and Magog

Gog and Magog are part of Allāh's creation, so numerous in number that no one could dare wage war against them. They are believed to be of the progeny of Yāfith, a son of prophet Nūḥ (ﷺ). The Glorious Qur'ān, as well as the *Sunnah* contain references to the emergence of Gog and Magog. Allāh (ﷻ) says,

﴿ حَتَّىٰٓ إِذَا فُتِحَتۡ يَأۡجُوجُ وَمَأۡجُوجُ وَهُم مِّن كُلِّ حَدَبٖ يَنسِلُونَ ٩٦ وَٱقۡتَرَبَ ٱلۡوَعۡدُ ٱلۡحَقُّ فَإِذَا هِيَ شَٰخِصَةٌ أَبۡصَٰرُ ٱلَّذِينَ كَفَرُواْ ﴾.

1- See the glossary for its definition.

2- The text of the *ḥadīth* has been taken from the latter.

Until when Gog and Magog are let loose [from their wall], and they swoop down from every mound. And [when] the true promise [i.e. the Resurrection] has approached; then suddenly the eyes of those who disbelieved will be staring [in horror]. (al-Anbiyā': 96, 97).

Zainab bint Jaḥsh (رضي الله عنها), one of the Prophet's wives, also narrated that, one day, Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) dropped in on her while in fear saying,

(لا إله إلا الله، ويل للعرب من شر قد اقترب فتح من ردم يأجوج ومأجوج مثـل هـذه «وحلق بأصبعه الإبهام والتي تليها ...»).

***La ilāha illa Allāh* (None has the right to be worshipped save Allāh). Woe to the Arabs for an imminent danger; A hole has been made in the wall of Gog and Magog, like this.** He demonstrated this by forming a circle with his thumb and index fingers… (*Bukhāri*: 3346; *Muslim*: 2880).

e) **Demolition of the *Ka'bah*** and looting of its ornaments by a man called *Dhū-Suwaiqatain* (i.e. the thin-legged man) from *Abyssinia* (now Ethiopia).

The proofs of this from the *Sunnah* include what Abū Hurairah (ﷺ) narrated that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said,

(يخرب الكعبة ذو السويقتين من الحبشة).

***Dhū-Suwaiqatain* from Abyssinia will demolish the *Ka'bah*.** (*Bukhāri*: 1591; *Muslim*: 2909).

Imam Aḥmad also reported through a sound chain of transmission that 'Abdullah bin 'Amr (رضـي الله عنـهما) narrated that he heard Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) saying,

(يخرب الكعبة ذو السويقتين من الحبشة، ويسلبها حليها ويجردها من كسوتها، ولكأني أنظر إليه أصيلع أفيدع يضرب عليها بمسحاته ومعوله).

***Dhū-Suwaiqatain* from Abyssinia will destroy the *Ka'bah*, loot its decoration and strip it of its covering. As if I were looking at him [now]; a bald-headed man, with bent wrist or ankle, striking at it [i.e. the *Ka'bah*] with his shovel and pickaxe.** (*Musnad Aḥmad* vol. ii, p. 220).

f) The Smoke

This refers to the eruption of a heavy smoke from the sky, which shall cover all people. The proof of this in the Glorious Qur'ān goes as follow:

﴿ فَٱرْتَقِبْ يَوْمَ تَأْتِى ٱلسَّمَآءُ بِدُخَانٍ مُّبِينٍ ۝١٠ يَغْشَى ٱلنَّاسَ هَٰذَا عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ﴾.

Then watch for the Day when the sky will bring a visible smoke. Covering the people; this is a painful torment. (al-Dukhān: 10, 11).

As for the proof from the *Sunnah*, the *ḥadīth* of Ḥudhaifah bin Asid (ﷺ) mentioned earlier has it that,

(إنها لن تقوم حتى تروا قبلها عشر آيات فذكر الدخان والدجال والدابة).

Indeed it [i.e. the Hour] will not come to pass until you see ten signs preceding it. The Prophet (ﷺ) then mentioned the Smoke, *Dajjāl* (the Antichrist) and the Beast. (*Muslim*: 2901).

g) The Qur'ān shall be lifted (retrieved) from the earth back to heaven

This will be to the extent that no single verse, whether it had been written down or committed to memory, shall be left out. A

reference to this comes in a *ḥadīth* narrated by Ḥudhaifah [bin al-Yamān], wherein he quoted Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) as saying,

(يدرس الإسلام كما يدرس وشي الثوب حتى لا يدرى ما صيام ولا صلاة ولا نسك، وليُسْرَى على كتاب الله عز وجل في ليلة فلا يبقى في الأرض منه آية...).

Islam will be effaced just as the embroideries of any cloth get blotted out, until no one will know of neither fasting, nor *ṣalāh* (prayer), nor the *nusuk* (i.e. pilgrimage: Hajj or 'Umrah). The Book of Allāh will be retrieved in just one night, and no single verse of it shall remain on the earth. (*Sunan ibn Mājah* vol. ii, p. 1344, *ḥadīth* no. 4049; *al-Mustadrak* vol. iv p. 473[1]).

h) Rising of the sun from the west.

This also has been mentioned in the Qur'ān and the *Sunnah*. Allāh (ﷻ) says,

﴿يَوْمَ يَأْتِي بَعْضُ ءَايَٰتِ رَبِّكَ لَا يَنفَعُ نَفْسًا إِيمَٰنُهَا لَمْ تَكُنْ ءَامَنَتْ مِن قَبْلُ أَوْ كَسَبَتْ فِىٓ إِيمَٰنِهَا خَيْرًا﴾.

The day that some of the signs of your Lord will come no soul will benefit from its faith as long as it had not believed before or had earned through its faith some good. (al-An'ām: 158).

Many scholars of the Qur'ānic exegesis see in the clause "**some of the signs of your Lord**" a reference to this phenomenon, that is rising of the sun from the west. Imam al-Ṭabari said after relating the opinions of other scholars on the verse, "The most correct view in this regard is

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1- Going by the standard of the Muslim's collection of the *ḥadīths*, this *ḥadīth* has been classified by al-Ḥākim as authentic. al-Dhahabi is also in support of this view.

what has been overwhelmingly reported from the Prophet (ﷺ) that he said,

(ذلك حين تطلع الشمس من مغربها).

That is when the sun rises from the west[1].

Similarly, Both Bukhāri and Muslim reported on the authority of Abū Hurairah (ﷺ) that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said,

(لا تقوم الساعة حتى تطلع الشمس من مغربها فإذا طلعت فرآها الناس آمنوا أجمعون فذاك حين لا ينفع نفساً إيمانها لم تكن آمنت من قبل أو كسبت في إيمانها خيراً).

The Hour shall not come to pass until the sun rises from the west. When this happens and the people see it, they will all believe [in Allāh and in His religion]. That is when no soul will benefit from its faith, if it had neither believed nor earned some good through its faith before. (*Bukhāri*: 4636; *Muslim*: 157).

i) The appearance of the Beast (*Dābbah*)

The Beast is a prodigious hairy and legged creature, whose length is believed to be sixty cubits[2]. It is also assumed that it is a different creature bearing resemblance to many animals. Its coming before the Day of Resurrection has been confirmed in both the Glorious Qur'ān and the *Sunnah*. Allāh (ﷻ) says,

1- Al-Ṭabari, Ibn Jarīr, *al-Tafsīr* vol. viii, p. 97.

2- Cubit is an ancient measure of length based on the length of the forearm. (Translator)

﴿ وَإِذَا وَقَعَ ٱلْقَوْلُ عَلَيْهِمْ أَخْرَجْنَا لَهُمْ دَآبَّةً مِّنَ ٱلْأَرْضِ تُكَلِّمُهُمْ أَنَّ ٱلنَّاسَ كَانُوا۟ بِـَٔايَـٰتِنَا لَا يُوقِنُونَ ﴾

And when the word befalls them, We will bring forth for them a beast from the earth speaking to them, for the people were, of Our signs, not certain [in Faith]. (al-Naml: 82).

The Prophet (ﷺ) also said, according to a narration by Abū Hurairah (ﷺ),

(ثلاث إذا خرجن لا ينفع نفساً إيمانها لم تكن آمنت من قبل أو كسبت في إيمانها خيراً، طلوع الشمس من مغربها والدجال ودابة الأرض).

When [the following] three things appear, no good will it do to a person to believe then, if he had disbelieved before or had not earned some good through his faith:

1- Rising of the sun from the west.

2- [The coming of] the Antichrist (*Dajjāl*).

3- [The appearance of] the Beast (*Dābbah*) of the earth. (*Muslim*: 158).

Another *ḥadīth* reported by Imam Aḥmad on the authority of Abū Umāmah (ﷺ) reads as follows,

(تخرج الدابة فتسم الناس على خراطيمهم ثم يغمرون فيكم حتى يشتري الرجل البعير فيقول ممن اشتريته فيقول: من أحد المخطمين).

The Beast shall come out and mark people[1] on their noses. Then, those who have been marked will become many among you, to the extent that a man will buy a camel, and when he is asked, 'From whom did you buy it'? he replies, 'From one of those marked people'. (*Musnad Aḥmad* vol. v, p. 268[2]).

1- i.e. the infidels. Cf. *Faiḍ al-Qadīr* vol. iii, p. 236. (Translator)

2- Al- Haithami and some other scholars of the *ḥadīth* classified the chain of transmission for this *ḥadīth* as *ṣaḥīḥ* (sound).

j) The out-break of a raging fire, which will come forth from Aden [in Yemen] and drive the people to their place of assembly [on the Day of Judgement]. This portent will mark the end of all the major portents of the Day of Resurrection. The reference to the portent has come in the *ḥadīth* of Ḥudhaifah bin Asīd (ﷺ) quoted earlier, where the Prophet (ﷺ) was reported to have said,

(وآخر ذلك نار تخرج من اليمن تطرد الناس إلى محشرهم).

And the last of all this will be a fire which shall come forth from Yemen and drive people to their place of assembly [i.e. on the Day of Judgement]. (*Muslim*: 2901).

In another version of the same *ḥadīth*, the text reads as follows,

(ونار تخرج من قعرة عدن ترحل الناس).

And a fire which shall come forth from the depth of Aden and drive people away.

The aforementioned are the most important portents of the Hour, after which the Hour itself will be established by Allāh's permission. It has been reported, as well, that those portents shall follow one another in an uninterrupted sequence, like strung beads. Thus, no sooner that a portent surfaces than it will be quickly followed by another. According to al-Ṭabarāni, Abū Hurairah (ﷺ) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said,

(خروج الآيات بعضها على إثر بعض، يتتابعن كما تتابع الخرز في النظام).

The appearance of the portents shall be in continuous succession; they shall follow one another in an unceasing sequence, like beads strung with one another. (*al-Mu'jam al-Awsat* vol. v, p.148, *ḥadīth* no. 4283).

4.2 The bliss and punishment of the grave[1]

4.2.1 Believing in the bliss and punishment of the grave and the proofs establishing this

To believe in the bliss kept for those who are obedient to Allāh, and in the punishment reserved for whoever deserves it of the disobedient and undutiful persons, while in their graves, constitutes a basic element of Faith, duly attested to by both the Glorious Qur'ān and the *Sunnah*. On the bliss of the grave Allāh (ﷻ) has said,

﴿ يُثَبِّتُ ٱللَّهُ ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا۟ بِٱلْقَوْلِ ٱلثَّابِتِ فِى ٱلْحَيَوٰةِ ٱلدُّنْيَا وَفِى ٱلْـَٔاخِرَةِ ﴾.

Allāh keeps firm those who believe, with the firm word, in the worldly life and in the hereafter. (Ibrāhim: 27).

This verse indicates that Allāh (ﷻ) keeps the faithful firm in their answers to the questions they will be asked in their graves. Moreover, it is also an indication to what follows that of ease and comfort. Similarly, Bukhāri reported on the authority of al-Barā' bin 'Āzib (رضي الله عنهما) that the Prophet (ﷺ) said,

(إذا أُقعد المؤمن في قبره أُتي ثم شهد أن لا إلــه إلا الله وأن محمــداً رســول الله فــذلك قوله: ﴿ يُثَبِّتُ ٱللَّهُ ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا۟ بِٱلْقَوْلِ ٱلثَّابِتِ ﴾).

When a believer has been seated in his grave, [The two angels] come to him. Then, he will testify that there is no god worthy of worship except Allāh, and that Muḥammad is His Messenger. This is what Allāh referred to in His saying, 'Allāh keeps firm those who believe, with the firm word'... (*Bukhāri*: 1369).

As for the punishment of the grave, Allāh (ﷻ) said,

1- This theme will be discussed under three headings.

﴿وَحَاقَ بِآلِ فِرْعَوْنَ سُوءُ الْعَذَابِ ﴿٤٥﴾ النَّارُ يُعْرَضُونَ عَلَيْهَا غُدُوًّا وَعَشِيًّا وَيَوْمَ تَقُومُ السَّاعَةُ أَدْخِلُوا آلَ فِرْعَوْنَ أَشَدَّ الْعَذَابِ﴾.

And the worst of punishment enveloped the people of *Fir'awn* (Pharaoh). The Fire; they are exposed to it morning and afternoon. And the day the Hour comes to pass [it will be said], 'Make the people of Pharaoh enter the severest punishment'. (Ghāfir: 45,46).

Al-Qurtubi, a notable scholar of the Qur'ānic exegesis, commented on this, saying, "The majority of Muslim scholars are of the opinion that the scene [of the Pharaoh's people being exposed to Fire before the coming of the Hour] will be in the interval between a person's demise and his resurrection on the Day of Judgement (*Barzakh*). It is therefore, a proof confirming the existence of the 'Punishment of the Grave'." Another erudite scholar, al-Ḥāfiz Ibn Kathīr also said, "This verse is an important proof for *Ahl al-Sunnah* who infer from it the existence of the *Barzakh's* punishment in the grave[1]".

Another Qur'ānic verse proofing the reality of the Punishment of the Grave goes as follows,

﴿سَنُعَذِّبُهُم مَّرَّتَيْنِ ثُمَّ يُرَدُّونَ إِلَىٰ عَذَابٍ عَظِيمٍ﴾.

We shall punish them twice, and thereafter they will be brought back to a horrible punishment. (al-Tawbah: 101).

Many scholars among the pious predecessors have figured out from this verse a testimony on the reality of the punishment of the grave.

1- Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr,* vol. vii p. 136.

According to one of them, Mujahid (رحمه الله), "**We shall punish them twice**, that is, with starvation and the Punishment of the Grave. **Then, they will be brought back to a horrible punishment**, i.e. on the Day of Resurrection". Another scholar, Qatādah also expressed his view on the import of this verse by saying, "Punishment in the world and in the grave. Then, they will be brought back to a severe punishment". In addition, *Bukhāri*, the great scholar of the *ḥadīth* also used the verses mentioned above as proofs of the Punishment of the Grave in his classification of *ḥadīths* pertaining to this subject[1].

The proofs from the *Sunnah* concerning the bliss and punishment in the grave are many. For instance, 'Abdullah bin 'Umar (رضي الله عنهما) narrated that the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said,

(إنّ أحدكم إذا مات عرض عليه مقعده بالغداة والعشي إن كان من أهل الجنة فمن أهـــل الجنة وإن كان من أهل النار فمن أهل النار. فيقال هذا مقعدك حتى يبعثك الله يوم القيامة).

"When one of you [i.e. people in general] dies, he will be shown his position in the morning and in the afternoon. If he is of the people of Paradise, then his position among them shall be displayed for him. And if he is of the inhabitants of the Fire, then he will be shown his position among them. It will be said to him, 'This is your [ultimate] position; until Allāh resurrects you on the Day of Judgement'." (*Bukhāri*: 1379; *Muslim*: 2866).

Anas bin Mālik (ﷺ) also reported that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said,

1- Cf. *Bukhāri's* collection (*al-Ṣaḥīḥ*), the chapter of the *ḥadīths* relating to the Punishment of the Grave. (See *Fath al-Bāri* vol. iii, p. 231).

(لولا أن لا تدافنوا لدعوت الله أن يسمعكم من عذاب القبر).

Had it not been for [the fear I have] that you may cease to bury the dead among you, I would have asked Allāh to let you hear the Punishment of the Grave. (*Muslim*: 2868).

The proofs relating to this subject in the Qur'ān and the *Sunnah* are many. Allāh (ﷻ) knows best.

4.2.2 The two (i.e. bliss and punishment of the grave) are applicable to both the soul and the body

The bliss and punishment of the grave affect not only the corpse but the soul of the dead person as well. In other words, the enjoyment or the suffering of the soul is not unconnected with that of the body or the remains of the deceased, as both shall share the two together. However, it may happen in some cases that the soul alone enjoys the bliss or bear the torment. This has been duly proved in many religious texts, and has also been agreed upon by *Ahl al-Sunnah*, in contrast to an opposing view that only the soul would be, in all cases, the object of the bliss and punishment in the grave.

The proofs on this include a narration by Anas bin Malik (ﷺ) quoting the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) as saying,

(إن العبد إذا وضع في قبره وتولى عنه أصحابه وإنه ليسمع قرع نعالهم أتاه ملكان فيقعدانه فيقولان: ما كنت تقول في هذا الرجل (لمحمد ﷺ) فأما المؤمن فيقول: أشهد أنه عبـــد الله ورسوله فيقال له انظر إلى مقعدك من النار قد أبدلك الله به مقعداً من الجنة فيراهما جميعـــاً. وأما المنافق والكافر فيقال له ما كنت تقول في هذا الرجل؟ فيقول: لا أدري كنت أقول ما يقول الناس، فيقال: لا دريت ولا تليت، ويضرب بمطارق من حديد ضربة فيصيح صيحة يسمعها من يليه غير الثقلين).

When a servant [of Allāh][1] has been lowered into his grave, as his companions leave him behind, he, in fact, hears their footsteps. Two angels will come to him and get him seated, then ask him the following question: 'What did you use to say of this man (that is,

1- The servitude to Allāh here is generic, meaning every human being; as they are all completely under His control, the believers and non believers alike. (Translator)

Muḥammad ﷺ)'? As for a believer, his response will be: 'I testify that he is a servant of Allāh and His Messenger'. Then, it will be said to him, 'Take a look at your position in the Fire; Allāh has provided for you instead, another position in Paradise', and he shall see both. As for a hypocrite or an infidel, both of whom will be asked the same question, 'What did you use to say of this man'?, their answer will be: 'I do not know; I used to say what I heard people saying'. Then each of them will be told, 'Neither did you know, nor [take guidance through the] recitation [of the Glorious Qur'ān]'. After this, he will be hit with iron hammers, [the effect of that on him will be to the extent that] he will produce such a cry as everything near to him will hear, except human beings and *jinn*. (*Bukhārī*: 1338).

The lengthy *ḥadīth* narrated by al-Barā' bin 'Āzib, as reported by Aḥmad, Abū Dawūd, al-Ḥākim and others, also contain an important addition. In this *ḥadīth*, The Prophet (ﷺ) was quoted to have said, after mentioning the discharge of the soul, and the subsequent ascent of a believer's soul to heaven,

(فتعاد روحه في جسده فيأتيه ملكان فيجلسانه فيقولان له من ربك).

The soul of the dead person shall be returned back to his body. Then, two angels will come to him, make him sit and ask him, Who is your Lord?... (*Musnad Aḥmad* vol. iv, p. 287; *Sunan Abū Dawūd* vol. v, p. 75 *ḥadīth* no: 4753, al-*Mustadrak* vol. i, pp. 37-38[1]).

1- Al-Ḥākim and some other scholars classified this *ḥadīth* as authentic (*ṣaḥīḥ*).

The two aforementioned *ḥadīths*, therefore, show that the bliss and punishment in the grave are applicable to both the soul and the body. In the first *ḥadīth*, the clause, **'When a servant [of Allāh] has been lowered into his grave'** is a clear validation of this, for the word 'a servant' [meaning a person] definitely refers to both the body and the soul. On the other hand, the Prophet (ﷺ)'s declaration, in the second *ḥadīth*, that the soul would be returned back to the body during the interrogation, further buttresses this viewpoint. Furthermore, the words and terms used in both *ḥadīths* clearly reflect bodily specifications and qualities. Those expressions include, **'He hears their footsteps'; 'Two angels will come to him and get him seated'; 'He will be hit with iron hammers'**; and **'He will produce such a cry...'** All of these point to the fact that what befalls one of either bliss or punishment in his grave has to do with the soul and the body together.

However, in some other Islamic texts the implication is that the delight and agony of the grave may be confined, in some cases, to the soul alone. According to 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās (رضي الله عنهما), Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said,

(لما أصيب إخوانكم -يعني يوم أحد- جعل الله أرواحهم في أجواف طير خضر ترد أنهار الجنة وتأكل من ثمارها وتأوي إلى قناديل من ذهب في ظل العرش).

When your brothers were killed [as martyrs in the battle of Uḥud], Allāh made their souls to be inside green birds. The birds fly to the rivers of Paradise, eat of its fruits and retire to golden

lamps in the shadow of the Throne. (*Musnad Aḥmad* vol. i, p. 266; al-*Mustadrak* vol. ii, pp. 88, 297[1]).

Thus, we arrive at a conclusion that both the soul and the body are subject to bliss or punishment while in the grave, and this may be restricted to the sole alone in some cases. Regarding this, a leading scholar of the Prophetic tradition said, "*Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah* (The Orthodox Sunni Muslims) have unanimously agreed that both the body and the soul will be subject to the Bliss and Punishment of the Grave. The soul is thus tormented or blessed, either in isolation or together with the body as a single entity. The bliss and punishment are inflicted on both in this case, as they may also be restricted in some other cases to the soul alone".

1- A sound *ḥadīth*, in the opinion of both al-Ḥākim and al-Dhahabi.

4.2.3 Believing in the two angels, namely Munkar and Nakīr:

In the course of our discussion on the angels and their functions, we mentioned both Munkar and Nakīr as the two angels vested with the power to interrogate the dead in their graves. Here, we shall focus on believing in their existence in detail, and their role in trials of the dead; in as much as all this, by and large, constitutes part of our on-going discussion concerning the belief in Bliss and Punishment of the Grave.

Description of the two angels and their interrogation of the deceased after the funerals have been reported in many authentic *ḥadīths*. Tirmidhi and Ibn Ḥibbān both reported on the authority of Abū Hurairah (ﷺ) that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said,

(إذا قبر الميت –أو قال أحدكم– أتاه ملكان أسودان أزرقان يقال لأحدهما المنكر والآخر النكير، فيقولان ما كنت تقول في هذا الرجل، فيقول: ما كان يقول هو عبد الله ورسوله، أشهد أن لا إله إلا الله وأن محمداً عبده ورسوله، فيقولان: قد كنا نعلم أنك تقول هذا ثم يفسح له في قبره سبعون ذراعاً في سبعين..، وإن كان منافقاً قال: سمعت الناس يقولون فقلت مثله لا أدري، فيقولان: قد كنا نعلم أنك تقول ذلك، فيقال للأرض التئمي عليه فتلتئم عليه فتختلف أضلاعه فلا يزال فيها معذباً حتى يبعثه الله من مضجعه ذلك).

When a deceased -or perhaps he said, 'one of you'- has been buried, two black angels with blue eyes will come to him; one of them is *al-Munkar* and the other is called *al-Nakīr*. They will both ask the deceased, 'What did you use to say about this man'? He will then recount what he used to say [while he was alive] that, He [Muḥammad (ﷺ)] is a servant of Allāh and His Messenger; 'I testify that no one has the right to be worshipped save Allāh, and that Muḥammad is His servant and Messenger'. The two angels

will then say, 'We had known before that you would say what you have just said'. Thereafter, his grave will be expanded to the extent of 70x70 (4900 square) cubits. However, if he (the deceased) was a hypocrite, he would say, 'I heard people saying [something about the man] and I also said the same but I do not know'. The two angels will say, 'We knew already this was going to be your response'. After this, the earth will be told to press him and it will do until his ribs are clasped together; he will not be relieved of the torment until Allāh resurrects him from where he is. (*Sunan Tirmidhi* vol. iii, p. 383, *ḥadīth* no. 1071, *al-Iḥsān fi Taqrib Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān* vol. vii, p. 386 *ḥadīth* no. 3117[1]).

The *ḥadīth* of Anas bin Malik mentioned in the previous topic is also a proof of the interrogation in the grave by the two angels.

It is, therefore, obligatory to believe in all that has been proved in the *ḥadīths* concerning the names of the two angels, their description, as well as their interrogation of the deceased in their graves and the mode of that. Furthermore, we should have no doubt about what shall be the responses of either the believers or the hypocrites to their questions. Neither should we be skeptical about the comfort or distress that must eventually befall the dead, as elaborately explained in those *ḥadīths*.

Muslim scholars have different opinions concerning whether the interrogation in the grave will be for the followers of Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ) alone, or for all other nations of the past Messengers

1- Tirmidhi classified this *ḥadīth* as 'ḥasan-gharīb'.

(عليهم السلام) as well. However, based on the import of the available proofs, the view supporting that the interrogation will be a general phenomenon, affecting all and sundry, seems more correct. It is also the opinion of most of the erudite Muslim scholars. Allāh (ﷻ) knows best.

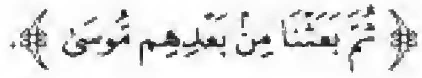
4.3 Believing in the Resurrection:

Believing in resurrection of the dead is one of the greatest fundamentals of Faith in Islam. Resurrection itself, as an issue, consists of many aspects traceable to proofs from Islamic texts. We shall now treat those aspects under different headings with a view to expose the essence of 'resurrection', the importance of believing in it, and what a believer should believe in, concerning its conditions and events.

4.3.1 The real meaning of 'the Resurrection' (*Al-Ba'th*)

The word *al-ba'th* in Arabic is used in two ways as follows:

First: It is used to mean 'sending' or 'dispatching' someone or something. We can note the instance of this usage in a saying of Allāh (ﷻ) that,



Then We sent after them Mūsā. (al-A'rāf: 103).

Second: It is also used as a synonym of other words, namely, '*ithārah*' and '*taḥrīk*' (awakening and prompting). Hence, it is commonly said, "*Ba'ath tu al-ba'īra fa n ba'atha*", meaning, "I incited or awoke the camel, then it got incited". Very close to this

meaning is when we say, '*Ba'thu al-mawtā*', that is, resurrection of the dead and bringing them out of their graves. Allāh (ﷻ) says,

﴿ ثُمَّ بَعَثْنَٰكُم مِّنۢ بَعْدِ مَوْتِكُمْ ﴾

Then We revived you after your death... (al-Baqarah: 56). i.e. We restored life back to you.

Resurrection (*al-Ba'th*) as an Islamic term would therefore imply raising-up of the dead and causing them to come out of their graves by Allāh (ﷻ). This resurrection means exactly that Allāh (ﷻ) will gather decomposed bodies of the dead and restore them back to their original forms and shapes with His Might. After that, He will reinstate their lives and drive them to their place of assembly for the final judgement. Allāh (ﷻ) says,

﴿ وَضَرَبَ لَنَا مَثَلًا وَنَسِىَ خَلْقَهُۥ ۖ قَالَ مَن يُحْىِ ٱلْعِظَٰمَ وَهِىَ رَمِيمٌ ﴿٧٨﴾ قُلْ يُحْيِيهَا ٱلَّذِىٓ أَنشَأَهَآ أَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ ۖ وَهُوَ بِكُلِّ خَلْقٍ عَلِيمٌ ﴾

And he puts forth for Us a parable, forgetting his [own] creation. He says, 'Who will give life to bones while they are disintegrated'? Say [O Muḥammad] 'He will give them life who produced them the first time; and He is, of every creation, All-Knowing. (Yā-Sin: 78, 79).

According to Ḥudhaifah (ﷺ), Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said,

(إن رجلا حضره الموت لما أيس من الحياة أوصى أهله: إذا مت فاجمعوا لي حطباً كثيراً ثم أوروا ناراً حتى إذا أكلت لحمي وخلصت إلى عظمي فخذوها فاطحنوها فذروني في اليم في يوم حار أو راح فجمعه الله فقال: لم فعلت؟ قال: خشيتك، فغفر له).

Death approached a man, who, having lost any hope to survive, instructed his family thus, 'Whenever I die, you should gather for me much firewood, and build a fire [to burn my remains]. When

the fire has eaten up my flesh and reached my bones, you should take the bones, grind them and then scatter the resulting powder in the sea on a windy day'[1]. [They did exactly as he had instructed them], but Allāh gathered his particles and then asked him, 'Why have you done so'? The man replied, 'Out of my fear of You'. Allāh, therefore, forgave him. (*Bukhāri*: 3479).

It is thus clear from the above quoted verse and *ḥadīth* that Allāh will reproduce the same bodies and gather their disintegrated remains, so that they are restored back to their original forms, after which He will give life back to them. Glorified is He (Allāh) who is never incapable of doing anything, and able is He to do all things.

The *Sunnah* has further shed light on how exactly the Resurrection will take place, adding that Allāh will send down water (rain) which shall bring forth the dead like grasses growing on the surface of the ground. According to both Bukhāri and Muslim, Abū Hurairah (ﷺ) narrated that the Messenger (ﷺ) said,

(ما بين النفختين أربعون) قال: أربعون يوماً. قال: أبيت، قال: أربعون شهراً؟ قال: أبيت، قال: أربعون سنة؟ قال: أبيت، قال: (ثم ينـزل الله من السماء ماء فينبتون كما ينبت البقل ليس من الإنسان شيء إلا يبلى إلا عظماً واحداً، وهو عجب الذنب ومنه يركب الخلق يوم القيامة).

Between the first blowing of the trumpet and the second one there shall be an interval of forty. The narrator, Abu Hurairah was asked, 'Is it forty days, or forty months, or forty years'?, but responded by

1- Cf. *Fatḥ al-Bāri* vol. vi, p. 522. (Translator)

saying 'I refused [to specify that][1]. **After that, Allāh will send down water from the sky, while the dead will rise in a manner similar to the growing of herbs. Every part of the human body will decay, except the coccyx, from which the whole body will be reconstructed on the Day of Resurrection.** (*Bukhārī*: 4935; *Muslim*: 2955).

Thus, the *ḥadīth* has explained how the Resurrection is going to be. It has also stated that the dead shall remain in their graves for forty, between the first and the second blowing of the trumpet; the first being the killing blowing, while the second will be for resurrection. Although the narrator of this *ḥadīth* did not specify whether the interval would be forty days, months or years, it has, however, been reported in some versions of the same *ḥadīth* that it will be forty years. When Allāh (ﷻ) decides to resurrect His creation, He will send from the sky water likened in some narrations to men's sperm. With that water, the dead bodies will be reverted into living human beings, who shall rise up from their graves like growing grasses, after every part of their bodies, save the coccyx, had disintegrated. It is worth reiterating here that the Prophets and Messengers of Allāh are exempted from this; their bodies shall never decay.

From the foregoing, we hope the reader has gained some insights regarding the nature, time and mode of resurrection. Allāh (ﷻ) knows best.

1- Cf. *Fatḥ al-Bārī* vol. viii, p. 414. (Translator)

4.3.2 Proofs establishing the Resurrection from the Glorious Qur'ān, the *Sunnah*, and reasoning

Glorious Qur'ān as well as the *Sunnah* have proved, in many instances, that Allāh (ﷻ) will resurrect the dead. Qur'ānic proofs in this respect include the following:

﴿ثُمَّ بَعَثْنَٰكُم مِّنۢ بَعْدِ مَوْتِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ﴾.

Then We revived you after your death that perhaps you would be grateful. (al-Baqarah: 56).

﴿مَّا خَلْقُكُمْ وَلَا بَعْثُكُمْ إِلَّا كَنَفْسٍ وَٰحِدَةٍ ۗ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ سَمِيعٌۢ بَصِيرٌ﴾.

Your creation [that is, Allāh's creation of all human beings] and your resurrection are just as [easy as the creation and resurrection] of a single soul. Indeed, Allāh is All-Hearing and All-Seeing. (Luqmān: 28).

﴿زَعَمَ ٱلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوٓا۟ أَن لَّن يُبْعَثُوا۟ ۚ قُلْ بَلَىٰ وَرَبِّى لَتُبْعَثُنَّ ثُمَّ لَتُنَبَّؤُنَّ بِمَا عَمِلْتُمْ ۚ وَذَٰلِكَ عَلَى ٱللَّهِ يَسِيرٌ﴾.

The unbelievers claimed that they would never be resurrected. Say, 'Yes, by my Lord, you will surely be resurrected, then you will surely be informed of what you did; and that, for Allāh, is easy'. (al-Taghābun: 7).

Concerning proofs from the *Sunnah*, Abu Hurairah (ﷺ) reported to have heard the Prophet (ﷺ) saying,

(لا تفضلوا بين أنبياء الله فإنه ينفخ في الصور فيصعق من في السموات ومن في الأرض إلا من شاء الله قال: ثم ينفخ فيه مرة أخرى فأكون أول من بعث أو في أول من بعث فإذا موسى آخذ بالعرش...).

Do not rate any of Allāh's Prophets as superior to another, for when the trumpet is blown, everyone on the earth and in the heavens will become unconscious, except those whom Allāh will

exempt. Then it will be blown once again and I will be the first person to be resurrected, or among those who will be the first to be resurrected, only to see Mūsā hanging on the Throne... (*Bukhāri*: 3414; *Muslim*: 2373).

In another narration, reported also by both Bukhāri and Muslim, but on the authority of Abu Sa'īd al-Khudri (ﷺ), the text reads as follows:

(... فأكون أول من تنشق عنه الأرض).

...And I will be the first person for whom the earth shall split apart. (*Bukhāri*: 2412; *Muslim*: 2278).

The body of the two *ḥadīths* thereby verified that on the Day of Resurrection, Allāh would raise up the dead from their graves, and cause them to proceed to the place of the final assembly (*Al-Maḥshar*). The *ḥadīths* on the other hand point out the distinctive quality of the Prophet (ﷺ) as the first person who will be resurrected on the Day of Judgement.

Sound logical reasoning is, likewise, another proof confirming the existence of Resurrection. A common-sense approach to the issue will reveal that restoration of an already created being after it had ceased to exist, otherwise known as resurrection, is much easier than the initial creation of that being. For this reason, Allāh (ﷻ) has cited in the Glorious Qur'ān the creation of man in the beginning as a clear proof of inevitability of the coming of the Resurrection. Allāh further stressed that He that is capable of beginning the creation, is surely, and even with greater reason, able to repeat it. Thus, He relates for us

in His Book the argument of that individual who questions the rationality of Resurrection, saying,

﴿مَن يُحۡيِ ٱلۡعِظَٰمَ وَهِيَ رَمِيمٞ﴾.

'Who will give life to bones while they are disintegrated'?. (Yā-Sin : 78).

Then, Allāh (ﷻ) refuted this argument saying,

﴿قُلۡ يُحۡيِيهَا ٱلَّذِيٓ أَنشَأَهَآ أَوَّلَ مَرَّةٖ﴾.

Say [O Muḥammad] 'He will give them life who produced them the first time'. (Yā-Sin :79).

Allāh says also,

﴿وَهُوَ ٱلَّذِي يَبۡدَؤُاْ ٱلۡخَلۡقَ ثُمَّ يُعِيدُهُۥ وَهُوَ أَهۡوَنُ عَلَيۡهِ﴾.

And it is He who begins creation; then He repeats it, and that is [even] easier for Him. (al-Rūm: 27).

This stands, therefore, as both textual and logical proof from the Glorious Book of Allāh against whoever denies or opposes the Resurrection, and what an irrefutable proof is it!

4.3.3 The final gathering:

There are textual proofs stating that all creatures will be gathered barefooted, naked and not circumcised in the Place of the Final Gathering (*al-Maḥshar*) after their resurrection. Allāh (ﷻ) says,

﴿وَحَشَرۡنَٰهُمۡ فَلَمۡ نُغَادِرۡ مِنۡهُمۡ أَحَدٗا﴾.

And We will gather them [all], leaving out none of them. (al-Kahf: 47).

﴿يَوۡمَ تُبَدَّلُ ٱلۡأَرۡضُ غَيۡرَ ٱلۡأَرۡضِ وَٱلسَّمَٰوَٰتُۖ وَبَرَزُواْ لِلَّهِ ٱلۡوَٰحِدِ ٱلۡقَهَّارِ﴾.

On the Day the earth will be changed to a different earth, and so will be the heavens too, and they [i.e. all creatures] will appear before Allāh, the One, the Prevailing. (Ibrāhīm: 48).

'Āishah (رضي الله عنها) narrated that she heard the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) saying,

(يحشر الناس يوم القيامة حفاة عراة غُرْلاً) قلت: يا رسول الله! النساء والرجال جميعاً، ينظر بعضهم إلى بعض؟ قال ﷺ: (يا عائشة الأمر أشد من أن ينظر بعضهم إلى بعض).

People will be gathered on the Day of Resurrection barefoot, naked and uncircumcised. I said, 'O Messenger of Allāh, men and women all together; looking at one another'! The Prophet (ﷺ) said, **O 'Āishah, the matter will be too serious for them to look at one another.** (*Bukhāri*: 6527; *Muslim*: 2859).

This gathering will be general embracing all creatures of Allāh. Some other Islamic texts make mention of another gathering, which shall take place either in Paradise or in Hell. In this case, the faithful will be led to Paradise in the form of an honourable delegation, whose members will ride on camels. Allāh (ﷻ) has said,

﴿يَوْمَ نَحْشُرُ ٱلْمُتَّقِينَ إِلَى ٱلرَّحْمَٰنِ وَفْدًا﴾.

The Day We will gather the pious unto [Allāh] the Most Merciful as a delegation. (Maryam: 85).

Imam Ṭabari narrated that 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) said regarding the meaning of this verse, "By Allāh! [members of] this delegation will neither be summoned walking on their feet, nor be driven [in a humiliating manner]. Rather, they will be presented with she-camels, the like of which no created being has ever seen. They [i.e. their riding camels] will have on them golden saddles, and their bridles will be made of aquamarine. They will mount these camels until they knock on the doors of Paradise[1]".

1- *Al-Ṭabari, Tafsīr* vol. viii, p. 380.

As for the disbelievers, they will be led to Hell-fire prone on their faces; blind, dumb and deaf. Allāh (ﷻ) said,

﴿ٱلَّذِينَ يُحۡشَرُونَ عَلَىٰ وُجُوهِهِمۡ إِلَىٰ جَهَنَّمَ أُوْلَٰٓئِكَ شَرّٞ مَّكَانٗا وَأَضَلُّ سَبِيلٗا﴾.

The ones who are gathered [prone] on their faces to Hell, those are the worst in position and, as to [the straight] path, most astray. (al-Furqān: 34).

﴿وَنَحۡشُرُهُمۡ يَوۡمَ ٱلۡقِيَٰمَةِ عَلَىٰ وُجُوهِهِمۡ عُمۡيٗا وَبُكۡمٗا وَصُمّٗا﴾.

And We will gather them on the Day of Resurrection [prone] on their faces – blind, dumb and deaf. (al-Isrā': 97).

4.3.4 Description of the Prophet's heavenly cistern (*Ḥawḍ*) and the proofs concerning it

The *Ḥawḍ* is a huge water basin Allāh has given the Prophet (ﷺ). It is located at the Place of the Final Assembly (*Maḥshar*) where he and his followers shall come (to drink from). This cistern has been described in many texts as (containing water) whiter than milk, colder than ice, sweeter than honey and more fragrant than musk. Yet, it is extremely wide; both its length and breadth measuring equally, while each of its angles covers the distance of one month's walk. Its water is supplied directly from Paradise, through a golden spout and another one made of silver. The number of vessels thereof is equal to that of stars in the sky.

The existence of the Prophet's cistern is confirmed in many authentic *ḥadīths*, rated by some competent scholars as *mutawātirs*[1]. The *ḥadīths* were narrated by more than thirty companions of the Prophet (ﷺ), including Anas bin Malik (رضي الله عنه) who quoted the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) as saying,

(إنّ قدر حوضي كما بين أيلة إلى صنعاء من اليمن وإنّ فيه من الأباريق كعدد نجوم السماء).

The dimensions of my cistern are just like the distance between *Aylah* and *San'ā'* in Yemen, while its cups are as many as the number of stars in the sky. (*Bukhārī*: 6580; *Muslim*: 2303).

1- A *mutawātir ḥadīth* is that which has been narrated at all stages of transmission by so many persons, that their number and trustworthiness eliminate doubts about its authenticity. (Translator)

'Abdullah bin 'Amr bin al-'Ās also narrated saying, The Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said,

(حوضي مسيرة شهر وزواياه سواء، ماؤه أبيض من اللبن، وريحه أطيب من المسك، وكيزانه كنجوم السماء من شرب منها فلا يظمأ أبداً).

The extent of my cistern is equivalent to the distance of a month journey [on foot]. Its angles are equal, while the water thereof is whiter than milk and more fragrant than musk. As for its vessels, they are like stars in the sky. Whoever drinks from it shall never feel thirsty again. (*Bukhārī*: 6579; *Muslim*: 2292).

The cistern, as said earlier, is located at the Place of the Final Assembly, and its water gush forth from River *Kawthar*, which is another river in Paradise that Allāh has also given the Prophet (ﷺ). Allāh (ﷻ) said,



We have, indeed, granted you [O Muḥammad] the *Kawthar*. (al-Kawthar: 1).

Some scholars are of the opinion that the heavenly balance (*Al-Mīzān*) comes before the cistern (*Ḥawḍ*), while other scholars maintain that the cistern comes first. The latter view is, however, the correct one. Imam Qurtubi, a notable scholar of the Qur'ānic exegesis, said, "This [i.e. that the *Ḥawḍ*, chronologically, will precede the *Mīzān*] seems to be meaningful, for people shall come out of their graves thirsty".

4.3.5 '*Al-Mīzān*' (The heavenly balance/scales): Features and proofs:

Al-Mīzān, a real balance with two pans and a pivot, is another constituent part of the mandatory belief concerning events of the Day of Reckoning. It will be used for weighing people's deeds, and shall tilt with any good or bad deed equal to even the weight of an atom. Proofs from the Qur'ān and the *Sunnah* on the existence of the heavenly scales include the following. Allāh (ﷻ) says,

﴿ وَنَضَعُ ٱلْمَوَٰزِينَ ٱلْقِسْطَ لِيَوْمِ ٱلْقِيَـٰمَةِ فَلَا تُظْلَمُ نَفْسٌ شَيْـًٔا ﴾.

And We shall place the balances of justice on the Day of Resurrection, so no soul will be treated unjustly at all… (al-Anbiyā': 47).

﴿ فَأَمَّا مَن ثَقُلَتْ مَوَٰزِينُهُۥ ۝٦ فَهُوَ فِى عِيشَةٍ رَّاضِيَةٍ ۝٧ وَأَمَّا مَنْ خَفَّتْ مَوَٰزِينُهُۥ ۝٨ فَأُمُّهُۥ هَاوِيَةٌ ﴾.

Then as for one whose balances [of good deeds] will be [found] heavy. He will be in a pleasant life [in Paradise]. But as for one whose balances will be [found] light. He will have his home in a pit [that is, Hellfire]. (al-Qāri'ah: 6-9).

According to both Bukhāri and Muslim, Abū Hurairah (ﷺ) reported a saying of Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) reading as follow:

(كلمتان حبيبتان إلى الرحمن خفيفتان على اللسان ثقيلتان في الميزان: سبحان الله وبحمده سبحان الله العظيم).

[There are] two expressions that are dear to [Allāh], the Most Merciful; very light [i.e. easy] for the tongue to pronounce, and yet heavy in weight in the scales [of human deeds]. They are: '*Subḥāna Allāh wa bi ḥamdihi, subḥāna Allāh al-'Aẓīm*' (Glory be

to Allāh, and praise be to Him. Glory be to Allāh the Sublime). (*Bukhārī*: 7563; *Muslim*: 2694).

Another narration by Imam Aḥmad, al-Ḥākim and others, revealed that Ibn Mas'ūd, a Ccompanion of the Prophet (ﷺ) once climbed an *arākah*[1] tree. Being a thin legged person, the wind started to shake him, and this scene made the people around him scoffed at him. Then, the Messenger (ﷺ) asked them of the cause of their laugh, and they replied, 'O the Prophet of Allāh, it was the thinness of his (Ibn Mas'ūd's) shins that made us laugh'. The Prophet (ﷺ) said, **'By Him (Allāh) in whose Hand is my life, those shins [of Ibn Mas'ūd] are, indeed, heavier in the Balance than the mountain of Uḥud'.** (*Musnad Aḥmad* vol. i, pp. 420, 421; al- Mustadrak vol. iii, p. 317[2]).

Based on what we found in some Islamic texts, the heavenly scales will be used to weigh three different things. These are:

1- Deeds.

It has been authoritatively reported that mankind's deeds will be materialized and weighed in the Balance on the Day of Judgment. The above quoted *ḥadīth* narrated by Abū Hurairah, i.e. 'The two expressions that are dear to [Allāh] the Most Merciful...' is an evidence for this.

2- The sheets or scrolls where the deeds are recorded.

The proof of this is a *ḥadīth* narrated by 'Abdullah bin 'Amr bin al-'Āṣ (رضي الله عنهما), quoting Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) as saying,

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1- *Arākah* is the tree whose small branches are usually used as sticks for cleaning the teeth, especially in Muslim countries. (Translator)

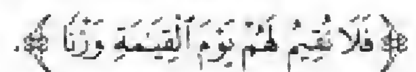
2- The *ḥadīth* has been classified as *ṣaḥīḥ* by both al-Ḥākim and al-Dhahabi.

(إن الله سيخلّص رجلاً من أمتي على رؤوس الخلائق يوم القيامة، فينشر له تسعة وتسعين سجلاً كل سجل مثل مد البصر ثم يقول: أتنكر من هذا شيئاً؟ أظلمك كتبتي الحافظون؟ فيقول: لا يا رب. فيقول: ألك عذر أو حسنة؟ فيبهت الرجل، فيقول: لا يا رب. فيقول: بلى إن لك عندنا حسنة واحدة، لا ظلم عليك اليوم فتخرج له بطاقة فيها: أشهد أن لا إله إلا الله وأنّ محمداً عبده ورسوله، فيقول: احضر وزنك فيقول: يا رب ما هذه البطاقة مع هذه السجلاّت؟ فقال: إنك لا تُظلم. قال: فتوضع السجلات في كفة والبطاقة في كفة، قال: فطاشت السجلات وثقلت البطاقة ولا يثقل شيء بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم).

On the Day of Resurrection, Allāh will single out a man among my followers in the presence of all other creatures and spread ninety–nine scrolls [records of bad deeds] over him; each scroll extending as far as the eyes could see. Then, He will say, 'Do you deny anything of these (recorded deeds)? Did My scribes, who kept watch, wrong you'? The man will reply, 'No, my Lord'. Then, Allāh will ask him whether he had done any good deed, or perhaps he has any excuse for the bad ones he had perpetrated. The man will become stunned and say, 'No my Lord'. Allāh will say, 'But you have [in you record here] with Us a good deed, and today you will not be wronged'. Then, a document will be brought out containing the testimony that 'None has the right to be worshipped except Allāh, and Muḥammad is both His servant and Messenger'. Allāh will then say, 'Come on to witness yourself the weighing [i.e. of your deeds]' The man says, 'O my Lord! Of what significance could this [single] document be with all these scrolls [of my wrong deeds]? Allāh will say, 'Surely, you will not be wronged'. The scrolls will be put in one of the scales [of the Balance] and the document in the other. The [99[scrolls will

become light, and the document, heavy; nothing becomes heavy when compared [in weight] with the name of Allāh the Entirely Merciful, the Especially Merciful. (*Musnad Aḥmad* vol. ii, p. 213; *Sunan Tirmidhi*, vol. v, p. 24-25, *ḥadīth* no. 2639; *al-Mustadrak* vol. i, pp. 6, 529[1]).

3- The person who performed the deeds himself is also subject to being weighed on the Day of Resurrection. This has been expressed in the following Qur'ānic verse, where Allāh says of the infidels,



We shall, therefore, assign no weight to them on the Day of Resurrection. (al-Kahf: 105).

Similarly, the *ḥadīth* of Ibn Mas'ūd (ﷺ), mentioned above, is another proof in this regard. As we have read in that *ḥadīth*, Ibn Mas'ūd's shins will be heavier on the scale than the mountain of Uhud.

1- A sound *ḥadīth*, according to both al-Ḥākim and al-Dhahabi.

4.3.6 Intercession ('*Al-Shafā'ah*'): Definition, types and proofs.

Literally, the word '*shafā'ah*' indicates 'means and request', while in conventional sense, it implies demanding the good on behalf of another person. On the other hand, *shafā'ah* or intercession with respect to Allāh (ﷻ) is to ask Him to overlook sins and misdeeds of another person.

The intercession with Allāh denotes, in essence, that He, out of His kindness and generosity, will on the Day of Resurrection allow some of His righteous creatures, angels, Messengers, or ordinary believers to intercede with Him for some sinners who had never associated partners with Him. This will be done with the aim of uncovering the honourable status of the intercessors in the sight of Allāh, as well as showing His mercy to those on whose behalf the intercession will be made.

The validity of an intercession of this kind is, however, conditional on the fulfilment of the following:

a) Allāh's permission for the intercessor to intercede, as clearly stated in His sayings that,

﴿مَن ذَا ٱلَّذِى يَشْفَعُ عِندَهُۥٓ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِۦ﴾.

Who is he that can intercede with Him except by His Permission? (Al-Baqarah: 255).

﴿وَلَا تَنفَعُ ٱلشَّفَٰعَةُ عِندَهُۥٓ إِلَّا لِمَنْ أَذِنَ لَهُۥ﴾.

And no intercession can avail with Him except for one whom He permits. (Saba': 23).

b) That Allāh is pleased with the person on whose behalf the intercession is made. The proof of this prerequisite is the saying of Allāh (ﷻ) that,

﴿وَلَا يَشْفَعُونَ إِلَّا لِمَنِ ارْتَضَىٰ﴾.

And they cannot intercede except for one with whom He [Allāh] is pleased. (al-Anbiyā': 28).

Whereas there are Islamic texts proving that Allāh only approves of intercessions made on behalf of the monotheist believers. Muslim reported on the authority of Abū Hurairah (ﷺ) that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said,

(لكل نبي دعوة مستجابة فتعجل كل نبي دعوته وإني اختبأت دعوتي شفاعة لأمتي يوم القيامة فهي نائلة إن شاء الله من مات من أمتي لا يشرك بالله شيئاً).

To every Prophet [Allāh has given] a granted supplication. While every other Prophet had shown haste in [reaping the fruit of] his supplication, I have reserved mine for intercession for my followers on the Day of Resurrection. And if Allāh so willed, it would reach every individual of my nation (i.e. my followers) who dies without associating partners with Allāh. (*Muslim*: 199).

Moreover, Allāh (ﷻ) said about the unbelievers,

﴿فَمَا تَنفَعُهُمْ شَفَٰعَةُ ٱلشَّٰفِعِينَ﴾.

Therefore, no intercession of the intercessors will be of any use to them. (Mudaththir: 48).

There are many proofs, in the Glorious Qur'ān and the *Sunnah*, establishing the intercession with Allāh on the Day of Resurrection. Having mentioned above some of the Qur'ānic texts in this regard, we shall now quote some of the many proofs from the *Sunnah* relating to

this issue as well. Abu Sa'īd al-Khudri (ﷺ) reported that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said,

(... فيقول الله تبارك وتعالى شفعت الملائكة وشفع النبيون وشفع المؤمنون ولم يبق إلا أرحم الراحمين فيقبض قبضة من النار فيخرج منها قوماً لم يعملوا خيراً قط).

... Allāh , Blessed and Exalted be He, will then say [on the Day of Resurrection], 'The angels, the Prophets and the believers have all interceded. Now it is the turn of [Allāh] the Most Merciful of those who show mercy'. Upon that, He will take a handful of (the inhabitants of) Hellfire and thereby set free from it a group who had never done any good deed. (*Musnad Aḥmad* vol. iii, p.94; al-Ṣan'āni, 'Abdul Razzaq, *al-Musannaf* vol. xi, p.410, *ḥadīth* no. 20857).

The *ḥadīths* on the intercession on the Day of Resurrection are numerous. Eminent Muslim scholars have also testified to their being famous and frequent in the *Ṣiḥāḥ*[1] and *Masānīd*[2] *ḥadīth* literatures. Furthermore, it has been reported in the two most authentic collections of *ḥadīth* that,

(يُخرج من النار من كان في قلبه مثقال حبة من خردل من إيمان).

Anyone who has Faith in his hearth, even equal to the weight of a mustard seed, shall be taken out from Hellfire. (*Bukhāri*: 7439; *Muslim*: 184).

1- i.e. those collections of the *ḥadīths* consisting, only, of the sound or authentic *ḥadīths*. (Translator)

2- *Masānīd* is the plural form of *Musnad*, which means, in technical sense, a collection of the *ḥadīths* arranged according to their narrators, and not according to their contents. A Musnad may consist of authentic and weak traditions. (Translator)

Types of the Intercession:

Any intercession, in view of either its acceptance or otherwise, is divisible into two: accepted and rejected. As for the former, it is such an intercession that fulfils all conditions, while the latter is that which fails to comply with one or more of the stipulated provisos, which we have mentioned earlier in this book.

A total of eight types of intercession are for our Prophet (ﷺ), and they all belong to the category of the accepted intercession. These are:

The Greatest Intercession (*Al-Shafā'ah al-'Uẓmā*)

1- This refers to the Prophet's (ﷺ) intercession for people on Doomsday; he will beseech Allāh to commence judgement between them after they had waited for long in an helpless mood. This privilege of interceding in that critical situation, referred to elsewhere as the Laudable Position (*Maqām Maḥmūd*), is one of the distinctive characteristics of our Prophet (ﷺ) above all other Messengers of Allāh, may His Blessings be upon all of them.

2- The Prophet's intercession for a group of people whose good and bad deeds will be equal. He will mediate for them so as to be admitted into Paradise.

3- The Prophet's intercession for a group of people, so that they will be exempted from going to Hell, even though they really deserve that.

4- His mediation for the inhabitants of Paradise, with a view to get their positions elevated.

5- He will also intercede for another group to be admitted into Paradise without being called to account for their deeds.

6- He will, similarly, mediate for some others who deserve to be punished, so that their punishment may be toned down. The Prophet's (ﷺ) intercession for his uncle, Abū Ṭālib belongs to this category.

7- The dwellers of Paradise will also be given permission to enter it only after the Prophet's intercession on their behalf.

8- He will also intercede for some of his followers who had entered Hell on account of their major sins, to be liberated from it.

All of these types of intercession are confirmed in many authentic texts, the details of which are available in books of Islamic Creed and *Sunnah*.

Some of the aforementioned types of mediation are given specifically to the Prophet (ﷺ) alone. Such as the Greatest Intercession, the intercession for his uncle, Abū Ṭālib, and the one meant for gaining entrance permission for the inhabitants of Paradise. However, carrying out other forms of intercession, such as the one for perpetrators of major sins, involves all other Prophets and righteous men and women. The question of whether or not this or that particular type of intercession is a special quality of the Prophet (ﷺ) remains unresolved among the scholars, in some few cases. Allāh (ﷻ) knows best.

4.3.7 The heavenly bridge (*Al-Ṣirāṭ*): Features and proofs:

From a linguistic viewpoint, the word *'ṣirāṭ'* refers to a plain route. *Ṣirāṭ*, in the Islamic perspective, is a bridge stretched across the Hellfire, which every one, whether of old or later times, will have to cross on the Day of Resurrection. It will also be the pathway for those who shall proceed from the place of Final Assembly to Paradise.

There are proofs from both the Qur'ān and the *Sunnah* confirming the existence of this bridge. For instance, Allāh (ﷻ) says,

﴿ وَإِن مِّنكُمْ إِلَّا وَارِدُهَا كَانَ عَلَىٰ رَبِّكَ حَتْمًا مَّقْضِيًّا ﴿٧١﴾ ثُمَّ نُنَجِّي الَّذِينَ اتَّقَوا وَّنَذَرُ الظَّالِمِينَ فِيهَا جِثِيًّا ﴾

And there is none of you except he will come to it (Hell). This is upon your Lord an inevitability decreed. Then We will save those who feared Allāh and leave the wrongdoers therein [humbled] on their knees. (Maryam: 71,72).

"Coming to it (Hell)" as mentioned above, means, according to the majority of Qur'ānic exegesis scholars, crossing the *ṣirāṭ* bridge. This view was also expressed by Ibn 'Abbās, Ibn Mas'ūd, Ka'b al-Aḥbār and others.

In the same vein, Abu Sa'īd al-Khudri (ﷺ) reported, in a detailed narration of the events of *Ru'yah*[1] and the intercession in the hereafter, that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said,

1- i.e. seeing Allāh (ﷻ). (Translator)

(... ثم يؤتى بالجسر فيجعل بين ظهري جهنم قلنا يا رسول الله وما الجسر؟ قال: مدحضة مزلة، عليه خطاطيف وكلاليب وحسكة مفلطحة لها شوكة عقيفاء تكون بنجد يقال لها السعدان، المؤمن عليها كالطرف وكالبرق، وكالريح وكأجاويد الخيل والركاب فناج مسلم وناج مخدوش ومكدوس في نار جهنم يمر آخرهم يسحب سحباً).

Then the bridge will be laid across Hell. We [i.e. the Companions of the Prophet (ﷺ)] said, 'O Allāh's Messenger, what is the bridge'?. He replied, "**It is a slippery [bridge] on which there are hooks and wide thorny seed, bearing prickles with bent ends. Such a thorny seed, called *al-Sa'dān* is usually found in *Najd* area[1]. Some believers will cross the *Ṣirāṭ* bridge as quickly as the wink of an eye. Some others as fast as lightning, some as fast as the wind and some as fast horses and camels. Some of them will, therefore, land safely without any harm, some after receiving some scratches, while some will fall down into Hell. The last person will cross [the bridge] being dragged.** (*Bukhārī*: 7439, *Muslim*: 183[2]).

The '*Ṣirāṭ*' bridge is described in many *ḥadīths* as more delicate than hair and sharper than a sword. It is also said to be so slippery that one can hardly stand firm on it, except he whom Allāh will make to secure there a foothold. This bridge shall be laid in a murky place. However, people will be given light in accordance with the level of their Faith, thereby crossing it in different conditions based on the degree of their Faith as explained earlier in the previous *ḥadīth*.

1- The central plain of Arabia is called Najd. Riyāḍ, the capital of Saudi Arabia, for instance, is located in Najd. (Translator)

2- The *ḥadīth* as quoted above has been taken from the *Bukhārī's* compilation.

4.3.8 Description of Paradise and Hell-fire, as well as how to believe in both, and the proofs regarding that.

Believing in the existence of Paradise and Hell is a religious obligation. Paradise, situated in the Seventh Heaven near the Lote-tree of the Utmost Boundary, is the abode meant for rewarding whoever obeys Allāh. Allāh (ﷻ) has said,

﴿ وَلَقَدْ رَءَاهُ نَزْلَةً أُخْرَىٰ ﴿١٣﴾ عِندَ سِدْرَةِ ٱلْمُنتَهَىٰ ﴿١٤﴾ عِندَهَا جَنَّةُ ٱلْمَأْوَىٰ ﴾.

And surely, he has seen him [Jibrīl] in another descent [on another occasion]. At the Lote-tree of the Utmost Boundary. Near it is the Paradise of Abode. (al-Najm: 13-15).

Paradise comprises one hundred degrees in all, the scope between every degree and another is like the distance between the sky and the earth. Abū Hurairah narrated that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said,

(إن في الجنة مائة درجة أعدها الله للمجاهدين في سبيل الله، ما بين الدرجتين كما بين السماء والأرض).

There are one-hundred degrees in Paradise, which Allāh has prepared for those who fight in His cause. The distance between every two degrees is equal to the distance between the sky and the earth. (*Bukhārī*: 2790).

The highest position in Paradise is called *'Al-Firdaws al-A'lā'*, on the top of which there is the Throne, and from it the rivers of Paradise shall gush forth. The above quoted *ḥadīth* of Abū Hūrairah (ﷺ) went further to say, **"So if you supplicate to Allāh, ask for the *Firdaws*, for it is the best part of Paradise and the highest position thereof. The Throne of [Allāh] the Most Merciful is at its top, and from it the rivers of Paradise gush forth".**

(فإذا سألتم الله فسلوه الفردوس فإنه أوسط الجنة وأعلى الجنة، وفوقه عرش الرحمن، ومنه تفجر أنهار الجنة).

Paradise has eight gates, as mentioned in the *ḥadīth* reported by Bukhāri on the authority of Sahl bin Sa'd (ﷺ), who quoted the Prophet (ﷺ) as saying,

(في الجنة ثمانية أبواب فيها باب يسمى الريان لا يدخله إلا الصائمون).

There are eight gates leading to Paradise, one of which is called '*Al-Rayyān*'; only those who used to fast will be allowed to enter through this gate. (*Bukhāri*: 3257). The bliss Allāh has prepared for dwellers of Paradise is such that no human being has ever seen or heard of, and neither has it ever occurred to a human mind.

On the other hand, Hellfire is the abode of everlasting punishment for the disbelievers, the polytheists and the hypocrites – whose hypocrisy is in relation to their Faith. Hell will similarly be a transient home for sinners among the faithful, whom Allāh may choose to punish in proportion to the gravity of their guilt, and then admit them into Paradise. Thus, He says,

﴿ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ لَا يَغْفِرُ أَن يُشْرَكَ بِهِۦ وَيَغْفِرُ مَا دُونَ ذَٰلِكَ لِمَن يَشَآءُ ﴾.

Indeed, Allāh forgives not associating partners with Him, but He forgives what is less than that for whom He wills. (al-Nisā': 48).

Hell is located in the Seventh Earth, according to a statement ascribed to Ibn 'Abbās (رضي الله عنهما), and consists of downward levels with varying degrees. A prominent Muslim scholar of the past, 'AbdulRaḥmān bin Aslam said, "The degrees of Paradise are in the

ascending order, while those of Hell are in the descending order. The nethermost of all the levels (of Hell) will be home of the hypocrites", just as Allāh (ﷻ) has said,

﴿ إِنَّ ٱلْمُنَٰفِقِينَ فِى ٱلدَّرْكِ ٱلْأَسْفَلِ مِنَ ٱلنَّارِ ﴾.

Indeed, the hypocrites will be in the lowest depth of the Fire. (al-Nisā': 145).

As for the gates to the Fire, there are seven in all. Allāh (ﷻ) says,

﴿ لَهَا سَبْعَةُ أَبْوَٰبٍ لِّكُلِّ بَابٍ مِّنْهُمْ جُزْءٌ مَّقْسُومٌ ﴾.

It has seven gates; for each of those gates is a portion of them [i.e. sinners] assigned. (al-Hijr: 44).

The known [i.e. ordinary] fire of this world is just a part of some seventy parts which make up the Hellfire. The *ḥadīth* confirming this, as reported by both Bukhāri and Muslim on the authority of Abū Hurairah, reads as follows:

(ناركم جزء من سبعين جزءاً من نار جهنم).

Your [ordinary] fire is one of the seventy parts of Hellfire. (*Bukhāri*: 3265; *Muslim*: 871).

There are three factors necessary for believing in both Paradise and Hell, these are:

1- To believe definitely in their existence; in Paradise as an abode for the righteous, and in Hellfire as home for disbelievers and hypocrites. Allāh (ﷻ) says,

﴿ إِنَّ ٱلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا۟ بِـَٔايَٰتِنَا سَوْفَ نُصْلِيهِمْ نَارًا كُلَّمَا نَضِجَتْ جُلُودُهُم بَدَّلْنَٰهُمْ جُلُودًا غَيْرَهَا لِيَذُوقُوا۟ ٱلْعَذَابَ ۗ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ كَانَ عَزِيزًا حَكِيمًا ﴿٥٦﴾ وَٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا۟ وَعَمِلُوا۟ ٱلصَّٰلِحَٰتِ سَنُدْخِلُهُمْ جَنَّٰتٍ تَجْرِى مِن تَحْتِهَا ٱلْأَنْهَٰرُ خَٰلِدِينَ فِيهَآ أَبَدًا ﴾.

Surely, those who disbelieve in Our *āyahs* [i.e. revelations or signs] We shall burn them in Fire. As often as their skins are roasted through We will replace them with other skins that they may taste the punishment. Indeed, Allāh is ever Mighty, All-Wise. But those who believe and do righteous deeds- We will admit them to gardens under which rivers flow, wherein they will abide forever... (al-Nisā': 56, 57).

2- Believing that both Paradise and Hell are, at the present time, already in existence. Allāh said of Paradise,

﴿أُعِدَّتْ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ﴾.

Prepared [already] for the pious. (Āl-'Imrān: 133).

Conversely, He also said concerning Hellfire,

﴿أُعِدَّتْ لِلْكَٰفِرِينَ﴾.

[Already] prepared for the disbelievers. (al-Baqarah: 24).

A *ḥadīth* narrated by 'Imrān bin Ḥuṣain (ﷺ) has it that the Prophet (ﷺ) said,

(اطلعت في الجنة فرأيت أكثر أهلها الفقراء، واطلعت في النار فرأيت أكثر أهلها النساء).

I looked into Paradise, and found the majority of its inhabitants to be of the poor. I also looked into the fire, and detected that most of the occupants thereof were women. (*Bukhāri*: 3241; *Muslim*: 2738[1]).

1- The *ḥadīth*, as quoted above, is from the *Bukhāri's* book, while *Muslim's* narration of the *ḥadīth* is concise, but carries the same meaning.

3- Believing in the permanent existence of both, as well as the immortality of their occupants. Allāh (ﷻ) says regarding Paradise,

﴿خَٰلِدِينَ فِيهَاۚ وَذَٰلِكَ ٱلۡفَوۡزُ ٱلۡعَظِيمُ﴾.

Dwelling eternally therein; and that is the great success. (al-Nisā': 13). And of the Fire He says,

﴿وَمَن يَعۡصِ ٱللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُۥ فَإِنَّ لَهُۥ نَارَ جَهَنَّمَ خَٰلِدِينَ فِيهَآ أَبَدًا﴾.

And whoever disobeys Allāh and His Messenger- then indeed, for him is the fire of Hell; they will abide therein eternally. (al-Jinn: 23). The disobedience referred to in this verse means infidelity or polytheism; hence, that rightly accounts for the description of the culprit's stay in Hell as permanent and everlasting. The famous Muslim scholar, al-Qurtubi, said, "The word 'eternally' in the verse indicates that the disobedience mentioned therein is polytheism[1]".

'Abdullah bin 'Umar (رضي الله عنهما) narrated that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said,

(يدخل الله أهل الجنة الجنة، وأهل النار النار، ثم يقوم مؤذن بينهم فيقول: يا أهل الجنة لا موت ويا أهل النار لا موت كل خالد فيما هو فيه).

Allāh will admit the people of Paradise into Paradise, and make the people of the Fire too to enter the Fire. Then, a caller will stand between the two parties and proclaim, 'O people of paradise! No death. O people of the Fire! No death; let everyone live eternally in his/her present abode'. (*Bukhāri*: 6544; *Muslim*: 2850[2]).

1- Al-Qurtubi, *al-Tafsīr*, vol. xix, p.27; Al-Shawkāni, *Fatḥu al-Qadīr* vol. v, p. 307.

2- The wording of the *ḥadīth* as mentioned above belongs to Muslim.

Benefits of believing in the Last Day.

Throughout his life, a believer enjoys immense benefits derived from his faith in the Last Day. These benefits include:

1- His interest in performing acts of obedience to Allāh is aroused, as he hopes to gain the reward of that Day. Fearing the potential punishment of that Day, on the other hand, creates in him a resisting force against any aspiration for committing acts of disobedience to Allāh (ﷻ).

2- This belief also serves as a comforter for the believer over any bliss or possessions of this world that may elude him, for he hopes to be compensated with better bliss and reward of the hereafter.

3- It equally helps the believer to realise the perfection of Almighty Allāh's justice, as He will requite everyone on the basis of his/her actions [in the world], in spite of being Merciful to all.

Chapter Five: Belief in Preordainment [al-Qaḍā' wa al-Qadar]

5.1 Definition, proofs and dissimilarities.

5.2 Stages of Pre-ordainment.

5.1 Definition, proofs and dissimilarities

5.1.1 What is Qaḍa' and what is Qadar?

The word '*Qaḍā*'' literally means judgement or decision. As an Islamic term, it implies any decree Allāh has made concerning His creatures. This may have to do with either their existence or extinction, or effecting certain changes in their life.

As for '*Qadar*' in the linguistic sense, it is a verbal noun suggesting comprehensive familiarity with the extent of an object. While from a strict Islamic viewpoint, '*Qadar*' is the sempiternal pre-ordainment by Allāh (ﷻ), regarding what happens to His creatures, based on His prior knowledge of that.

5.1.2 *Qaḍā'* and *Qadar* – any difference?

Muslims scholars explain the dissimilarity between the two terms in the following way:

Qadar is the process of predetermining something before it is decreed, while *Qaḍā'* implies winding up or completion of the matter. An erudite scholar of *ḥadīth*, Abū Ḥātim cited some examples to further clarify this issue. For instance, when a piece of cloth is given to a tailor, the first thing he does is to measure the cloth. At this stage the tailor may reduce from the cloth or add some extra metres to it as the case may be. However, when he has tailored it or made it to measure, he has thus finished working on that piece of cloth and cannot re-measure it again. *Qadar*, therefore, precedes *Qaḍā'*.

Another eminent scholar, Ibn al-Athīr also said, "The two are correlative and inseparable; *Qadar* represents a foundation, while *Qaḍā'* is like the building [to be erected on that foundation]. Whoever tries to separate one of them from the other is indeed trying to pull down the building entirely".

Anytime *Qaḍā'* and *Qadar* are jointly mentioned, an exclusive meaning must be given to each with the aim of distinguishing between the two terms. However, if one of them is used to the exclusion of the other, each term becomes, in this case, a synonym of the other, and the two, according to some scholars, may be used interchangeably.

5.1.3 Proofs:

Believing in Preordainment constitutes a pillar of Faith, as proved in many Qur'ānic and *ḥadīth* texts. The Qur'ānic proofs in this respect include:

﴿إِنَّا كُلَّ شَيْءٍ خَلَقْنَاهُ بِقَدَرٍ﴾.

Indeed, We created all things with preordainment. (al-Qamar: 49).

﴿وَكَانَ أَمْرُ اللَّهِ قَدَرًا مَّقْدُورًا﴾.

And ever is the Command of Allāh a decree predetermined. (al-Aḥzāb: 38).

﴿وَخَلَقَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ فَقَدَّرَهُ تَقْدِيرًا﴾.

He [Allāh] created everything and measured it exactly according to its due measurements. (al-Furqān: 2).

There are many *ḥadīths* on this issue as well, including the *ḥadīth* of Jibrīl, which we have quoted earlier in this book. The

Prophet (ﷺ) in his answer to Jibrīl's questions about the articles of Faith, mentioned **"the belief in Preordainment, whether favourable or not".**

In another *hadīth* reported by Muslim, 'Abdullah bin 'Amr bin al-'Āṣ (رضي الله عنهما) said, I heard the Messenger (ﷺ) of Allāh saying,

(كتب الله مقادير الخلائق قبل أن يخلق السماوات والأرض بخمسين ألف سنة قال: وكان عرشه على الماء).

Allāh had written the predetermined measures of His creatures fifty thousand years before He created the heavens and the earth and His Throne was upon water. (*Muslim*: 2653).

Furthermore, the Muslim nation, right from the time of the Companions, have all unanimously agreed on the obligation of the belief in Preordainment. Ṭāūs, a famous scholar who lived in the generation after the Companions (ﷺ), said, "I have met some of the Companions of Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ), they all used to say, 'Everything occurs in a proportion predetermined'." I also heard 'Abdullah bin 'Umar (رضي الله عنهما) narrating that the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said, **"There is a predetermined measure for everything; even for incapacity and capability or capability and incapacity".** (*Muslim*: 2655).

Imam Nawawi also said, "There are ample and conclusive proofs on the affirmation of Allāh's Preordainment [for all things] in the Glorious Qur'ān, the *Sunnah,* and the consensus of the Companions, as well as men of authority among the old and late generations".

5.2 Stages of Preordainment:

Based on what we have in various Islamic texts, and as those texts have been explained by Muslim scholars, preordainment or predestination has four stages, which are as follows:

First: Allāh's knowledge of everything, whether existent or non-existent, imaginable or even unimaginable. He encompasses all with His vast knowledge; hence, He knows what has occurred, what is going to occur, and what has never occurred, how it should have occurred, if at all it had occurred. A proof of this comes in the body of the following Qur'ānic verse:

﴿لِتَعْلَمُوٓاْ أَنَّ ٱللَّهَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ وَأَنَّ ٱللَّهَ قَدْ أَحَاطَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عِلْمًا﴾.

So you may know that Allāh is over all things competent, and that Allāh has encompassed all things in knowledge. (al-Ṭalāq: 12).

In addition, Ibn 'Abbās (رضي الله عنهما) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) was asked about the fate of the polytheists' offspring who died young, and he said,

(الله أعلم بما كانوا عاملين).

Allāh knows best what they would have done [i.e. if they had lived to come of age]. (*Bukhārī*: 1384; *Muslim*: 2659).

Second: The writing, by Allāh (ﷻ), of all things that will come to be until the Hour of Resurrection. Thus, He says,

﴿أَلَمْ تَعْلَمْ أَنَّ ٱللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ مَا فِى ٱلسَّمَآءِ وَٱلْأَرْضِ ۗ إِنَّ ذَٰلِكَ فِى كِتَٰبٍ ۚ إِنَّ ذَٰلِكَ عَلَى ٱللَّهِ يَسِيرٌ﴾.

Do you not know that Allāh knows what is in the heaven and earth? Indeed, that is in a book [i.e. recorded]. Indeed, that, for Allāh, is easy. (al-Ḥajj: 70).

﴿وَكُلَّ شَىْءٍ أَحْصَيْنَٰهُ فِىٓ إِمَامٍ مُّبِينٍ﴾.

And of all things We have kept count in a clear book. (Yā-Sīn: 12).

The *ḥadīth* of 'Abdullah bin 'Amr bi al-'Āṣ mentioned above is also relevant here as another proof, as it included information on how Allāh had written the measures of His creatures, fifty thousand years before the creation of the heavens and the earth.

Third: The wish [of Allāh ﷻ]; whatever Allāh wishes will certainly occur, and what He does not wish will never come to pass. Allāh (ﷻ) says,

﴿إِنَّمَآ أَمْرُهُۥٓ إِذَآ أَرَادَ شَيْـًٔا أَن يَقُولَ لَهُۥ كُن فَيَكُونُ﴾.

When He [Allāh] intends a thing, His Command is only that He says to it, "Be", and it is. (Yā-Sīn: 82).

﴿وَمَا تَشَآءُونَ إِلَّآ أَن يَشَآءَ ٱللَّهُ رَبُّ ٱلْعَٰلَمِينَ﴾.

And you cannot will except as Allāh wills- Lord of all the worlds. (al-Takwīr: 29).

Similarly, Abū Hurairah reported that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said,

(لا يقولن أحدكم: اللهم اغفر لي إن شئت! اللهم ارحمني إن شئت! ليعزم في الدعاء فإن الله صانع ما شاء لا مكره له).

None of you should say, 'O Allāh, forgive me if You wish', or 'If You like, have mercy on me'. Let he [i.e. the supplicant] be firm in

his invocation; Allāh does what He wills, and no one can compel Him. (*Bukhāri*: 6339; *Muslim*: 2679[1]).

Fourth: The creation of all things by Allāh (ﷻ), whose power to do that is absolute and unrestricted. He -Glorified be He- is the Creator of every act and its actor; every moving creature and its movement; and every inactive or motionless being and its inactivity. Allāh says accordingly,

﴿ ٱللَّهُ خَٰلِقُ كُلِّ شَيۡءٖۖ وَهُوَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيۡءٖ وَكِيلٞ ﴾.

Allāh is the Creator of all things, and He is, over all things, Disposer of affairs. (al-Zumar: 62).

﴿ وَٱللَّهُ خَلَقَكُمۡ وَمَا تَعۡمَلُونَ ﴾.

While Allāh has created you and [all] what you do/make. (al-Ṣṣāffāt: 96).

According to Bukhāri in his *ḥadīth* compilation, 'Imrān bin al-Ḥuṣain narrated that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said,

(... كان الله ولم يكن شيء غيره، وكان عرشه على الماء. وكتب في الذكر كل شيء، وخلق السماوات والأرض).

...In the beginning, there was nothing in existence save Allāh, [then, He created the Throne] and His Throne was upon water. He wrote everything in the Book[2], and created the heavens and the earth. (*Bukhāri*: 3191).

1- The wording, as quoted above, has been taken from Muslim's book.

2- i.e. the *Lawḥ Maḥfūẓ* (Preserved Slate), cf. *Fath al-Bari* vol.vi, p. 290. (Translator)

Believing in all the aforementioned stages is necessary for whoever wants to establish his Faith in Preordainment. Any one who disbelieves in one or more of them has failed to have the required belief regarding Allāh's preordainment of all things. Allāh (ﷻ) knows best.

Benefits of believing in Preordainment:

The belief in Preordainment affords the believer many important benefits. In addition, it has far-reaching impacts on his/her life. These include:

1- Relying on Almighty Allāh, even as one applies certain means to achieve his/her goals. This reliance stems from the awareness that it is Allāh who creates both the means and the goals they eventually lead to in exact proportions.

2- The rest of mind one enjoys as a result of his/her belief that everything is controlled by Allāh's Preordainment.

3- Setting oneself free from self-conceit upon the attainment of any goal in life. Such an achievement is only a favour from Allāh in view of what He has preordained of the means that led to it. Hence, one would, instead, be thankful to Allāh and avoid self-conceit.

4- Getting rid of anxiety and weariness in case one misses an opportunity or finds himself in unpleasant circumstances. He/she remains calm and patient in hope for reward from Allāh (ﷻ), having known that such conditions are part of what He has preordained.

SECTION THREE: OTHER ISSUES RELATING TO THE MUSLIM CREED

Chapter One: Islam, Īmān (Faith) and Iḥsān (Excellent Performance of Devotional Acts).

Chapter Two: Meaning and Norms of Alliance and Disavowal in Islam.

Chapter Three: The Due-rights of the Prophet's Companions.

Chapter Four: Our Duty towards the Muslim Rulers and the Populace, as well as the Need to Remain United with Them.

Chapter Five: Holding Fast to the Qur'ān and the *Sunnah*, as well as Prohibition of Disunity.

Chapter One: Islam, Īmān and Iḥsān

1.1 Islam:

1.1.1 Definition:

Linguistically, the word 'Islam' denotes compliance, submissiveness and obedience. On the other hand, 'Islam', as a religious term, is submission to Allāh by believing in His oneness, abiding by His laws, rejecting polytheism and being an adversary to the polytheists. Allāh (ﷻ) says,

﴿ قُلْ إِنَّ صَلَاتِي وَنُسُكِي وَمَحْيَايَ وَمَمَاتِي لِلَّهِ رَبِّ ٱلْعَٰلَمِينَ ١٦٢ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُۥ وَبِذَٰلِكَ أُمِرْتُ وَأَنَا۠ أَوَّلُ ٱلْمُسْلِمِينَ ﴾.

Say, 'Indeed, my prayer, my service of sacrifice, my living and my dying are for Allāh, Lord of the worlds. No partner has He. And this I have been commanded, and I am the first [among you] of the Muslims'. (al-An'ām: 162, 163).

﴿ وَمَن يَبْتَغِ غَيْرَ ٱلْإِسْلَٰمِ دِينًا فَلَن يُقْبَلَ مِنْهُ وَهُوَ فِى ٱلْءَاخِرَةِ مِنَ ٱلْخَٰسِرِينَ ﴾.

And whoever desires other than Islam as a religion, never will it be accepted from him, and he, in the hereafter, will be among the losers. (Āl-'Imrān: 85).

1.1.2 Pillars of Islam

The fundamental principles of Islam are five. The Prophet (ﷺ) explained this in a *hadīth* narrated by 'Abdullah bin 'Umar (رضي الله عنهما) saying,

(بُني الإسلام على خمس: شهادة أن لا إله إلا الله وأن محمداً رسول الله، وإقـام الـصلاة، وإيتاء الزكاة، والحج، وصوم رمضان).

Islam is based on five [pillars or principles]: To testify that none has the right to be worshipped except Allāh, and that Muḥammad is His Messenger, to perform the [obligatory] prayers dutifully, to pay the obligatory alms (zakāh), Hajj (Pilgrimage), and to fast during the month of *Ramaḍān*. (*Bukhāri*: 8; *Muslim*: 16).

Similarly, the *ḥadīth* of Jibrīl, which we have quoted several times in this book, is another proof in this respect. In that *ḥadīth*, Angel Jibrīl had asked the Prophet (ﷺ) to tell him about Islam, and his response was:

(الإسلام أن تشهد أن لا إله إلا الله وأن محمداً رسول الله، وتقيم الصلاة، وتؤتي الزكـاة، وتصوم رمضان، وتحج البيت إن استطعت إليه سبيلاً. قال: صدقت... إلخ).

Islam means that you bear witness that none has the right to be worshipped save Allāh, and that Muḥammad is Allāh's Messenger; that you perform the obligatory prayers dutifully; pay the obligatory alms (zakāh); fast in the month of Ramaḍān; and perform the pilgrimage, if you can afford that. He [i.e. Jibrīl] remarked, 'You have spoken the truth'. (*Bukhāri*: 50; *Muslim*: 8).

1.1.3 Meaning of 'Lā ilaha illa Allāh, Muḥammad rasūl Allāh'

Bearing witness that '*Lā ilāha illa Allāh*' means that only Allāh, and nothing else, has the right to be worshipped. On the other hand, testifying that 'Muḥammad is Allāh's Messenger', bespeaks that

one would follow his command, accept whatever he has said as true, shun all what he has either forbidden or warned against and never worship Allāh except in accordance with what he has laid down as rules, or preached.

1.2 Faith (Īmān) and its articles, and the Islamic ruling concerning perpetrators of major sins:

1.2.1 Definition:

The word "*Īmān*" literally means credence and acknowledgement. Conversely, *Īmān* as an Islamic term implies a doctrine that one holds in his heart, pronounces out verbally, and which also involves actions of the human organs.

1.2.2 Articles and proofs of Faith (*Īmān*)

The pillars or articles of Faith are six, as demonstrated in the following Qur'ānic verse:

﴿ لَيْسَ ٱلْبِرَّ أَن تُوَلُّوا۟ وُجُوهَكُمْ قِبَلَ ٱلْمَشْرِقِ وَٱلْمَغْرِبِ وَلَٰكِنَّ ٱلْبِرَّ مَنْ ءَامَنَ بِٱللَّهِ وَٱلْيَوْمِ ٱلْءَاخِرِ وَٱلْمَلَٰٓئِكَةِ وَٱلْكِتَٰبِ وَٱلنَّبِيِّۦنَ ﴾.

Righteousneess is not that you [merely] turn your faces toward the east or the west, but righteousness is [in] one who believes in Allāh, the Last Day, the angels, the Book and the Prophets... (al-Baqarah: 177).

Regarding proof from the *Sunnah,* we quote again the *ḥadīth* of Jibrīl, and precisely the Prophet's response to his question with respect to Faith. He said,

(أن تؤمن بالله وملائكته وكتبه ورسله واليوم الآخر، وتؤمن بالقدر خيره وشره. قال: صدقت... إلخ).

That you believe in Allāh, His angels, Books, Messengers and the Last Day. You should also believe in Preordainment whether auspicious or inauspicious. Jibrīl said, "You have said the truth". (*Bukhārī*: 50; *Muslim*: 8).

1.2.3 Increase and decrease in Faith

Evidently, both the Qur'ān and the *Sunnah* tell us that Faith deepens and weakens. The rise in one's faith is a consequence of engaging in devotional acts, while the opposite ensues from committing sinful acts. Allāh (ﷻ) said,

﴿ وَٱلَّذِينَ ٱهْتَدَوْا۟ زَادَهُمْ هُدًى وَءَاتَىٰهُمْ تَقْوَىٰهُمْ ﴾.

And those who are guided, He [Allāh] increases them in guidance and bestows on them their piety. (Muḥammad: 17).

﴿ إِنَّمَا ٱلْمُؤْمِنُونَ ٱلَّذِينَ إِذَا ذُكِرَ ٱللَّهُ وَجِلَتْ قُلُوبُهُمْ وَإِذَا تُلِيَتْ عَلَيْهِمْ ءَايَٰتُهُۥ زَادَتْهُمْ إِيمَٰنًا وَعَلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ يَتَوَكَّلُونَ ﴾.

The believers are only those who, when Allāh is mentioned, their hearts become fearful, and when His Verses are recited to them, that increases them in Faith, and upon their Lord they rely. (al-Anfāl: 2).

﴿ هُوَ ٱلَّذِىٓ أَنزَلَ ٱلسَّكِينَةَ فِى قُلُوبِ ٱلْمُؤْمِنِينَ لِيَزْدَادُوٓا۟ إِيمَٰنًا مَّعَ إِيمَٰنِهِمْ ﴾.

It is He who sent down tranquillity into the hearts of the believers that they may grow more in Faith along with their [present] Faith. (al-Fatḥ: 4).

Proofs of this from the *Sunnah* include the sayings of Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) that,

(يخرج من النار من كان في قلبه مثقال ذرة من إيمان).

He will [eventually] come out of (i.e. be freed from) Hell, whoever has in his heart Faith equal to the weight of an atom. (*Bukhārī*: 7510; *Muslim*: 193).

(الإيمان بضع وسبعون شعبة، أعلاها لا إله إلا الله، وأدناها إماطـــة الأذى عـــن الطريـــق، والحياء شعبة من الإيمان).

Faith consists of more than seventy branches, the highest of which is '*Lā ilāha illa Allāh*' (None but Allāh alone has the right to be worshipped), while the lowest is to remove harmful objects from the road. And modesty or bashfulness is also a branch of Faith. (*Muslim*: 57).

1.2.4 Islamic ruling concerning perpetrators of major sins:

Grave offences, from an Islamic viewpoint, are divided into two, offences that lead to disbelief and atrocities that do not disqualify one to be a Muslim. Some examples of the former include: ascribing partners to Allāh – which is the gravest offence ever committed against Him, hypocrisy in Faith, and blaspheming against Allāh or His Messenger. The latter involves such misdeeds, which, originally, are not considered to be beyond the pale of Islam. Thus, the perpetrator remains a Muslim unless he believes the acts themselves are lawful. These include usury or interest oriented transactions, murder, fornication and adultery etc. The Qur'ān and the *Sunnah* mention that any Muslim who commits major sins of this category remains a believer, although his/her Faith decreases, and would be called a sinner or disobedient person.

However, his fate in the hereafter lies squarely in whatever may please Allāh (ﷻ). If He likes, He will forgive him, out of His mercy. He may also, out of His justice, give him a taste of the

punishment he deserves, if He so wishes. In any case, the person will not remain permanently in Hell; he will eventually be admitted into Paradise on the grounds of what he had, while he was alive, of Faith and *Tawḥīd*. Allāh (ﷻ) says,

﴿ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ لَا يَغْفِرُ أَن يُشْرَكَ بِهِۦ وَيَغْفِرُ مَا دُونَ ذَٰلِكَ لِمَن يَشَآءُ ۚ وَمَن يُشْرِكْ بِٱللَّهِ فَقَدْ ضَلَّ ضَلَٰلًۢا بَعِيدًا ﴾.

Indeed, Allāh does not forgive [the sin of] associating partners with Him, but He forgives what is less than that for whom He wills. And whoever associates partners with Allāh has certainly strayed far away. (al-Nisā': 116).

Anas (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said,

(يخرج من النار من قال لا إله إلا الله وفي قلبه وزن شعيرة من خير، ويخرج من النار من قال لا إله إلا الله وفي قلبه وزن برة من خير، ويخرج من النار من قال لا إلـــه إلا الله وفي قلبـــه وزن ذرة من خير).

Whoever has said, '*Lā ilāha illa Allāh*', (None but Allāh alone has the right to be worshipped) having in his heart good [i.e. Faith] equal to the weight of a barley grain- will be taken out [i.e. freed] from Hell. Whoever has said, '*Lā ilāha illa Allāh*', having in his heart good [i.e. Faith] equal to the weight of a wheat grain, will be drawn out of Hell. And whoever has said, '*Lā ilāha illa Allāh*', having in his heart good [i.e. Faith] equal to the weight of an atom, will also come out of Hell. (*Bukhārī*: 44; *Muslim*: 192).

What we have stated above concerning perpetrators of major sins is in harmony with the view of the worthy predecessors of the

Muslim nation: the Companions, the Tābi'īn[1] and those who followed them on the path of guidance and good conduct. This, likewise, is the moderate approach in this regard, as opposed to other stances, which are either too extreme or very lenient. The Kharidjites[2], for instance, prove extremist by making anyone who commits a major sin a *de facto* apostate who deserves to be slain. They also believe that such a person would be a permanent occupant of Hellfire in the hereafter. On the other hand, the fanatic Murji'tes[3] have also gone too far, though in a reverse direction, by putting the perpetrator of mortal sins and a believer who abides by the rules of Islam and does not violate any of its laws, on an equal footing, regarding both of them as being perfect in their Faith.

*** Proofs indicating that a Muslim, even if he commits major sins, should not be considered an unbeliever**

The Qur'ānic evidence in this regard reads as follows:

1- i.e. the generation after the Companions. (Translator)

2- The Kharidjites or the Seceders are those who rose in opposition to both 'Ali and Mu'āwiyyah (رضي الله عنهما) after the arbitration that followed the Battle of Ṣiffīn. The Kharidjites hold, among many other extreme views, that there is an obligation to revolt against a leader of the Muslim state as a method of reformation. (Translator)

3- The Murji'ites are those who confine Faith to either just a word pronounced, or a doctrine held in the heart or even just mere knowledge of that, to the exclusion of deeds. (Translator)

﴿ وَإِن طَآئِفَتَانِ مِنَ ٱلْمُؤْمِنِينَ ٱقْتَتَلُوا۟ فَأَصْلِحُوا۟ بَيْنَهُمَا ۖ فَإِنۢ بَغَتْ إِحْدَىٰهُمَا عَلَى ٱلْأُخْرَىٰ فَقَـٰتِلُوا۟ ٱلَّتِى تَبْغِى حَتَّىٰ تَفِىٓءَ إِلَىٰٓ أَمْرِ ٱللَّهِ ۚ فَإِن فَآءَتْ فَأَصْلِحُوا۟ بَيْنَهُمَا بِٱلْعَدْلِ وَأَقْسِطُوٓا۟ ۖ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ يُحِبُّ ٱلْمُقْسِطِينَ ۝٩ إِنَّمَا ٱلْمُؤْمِنُونَ إِخْوَةٌ فَأَصْلِحُوا۟ بَيْنَ أَخَوَيْكُمْ ۚ وَٱتَّقُوا۟ ٱللَّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُونَ ﴾.

And if two factions among the believers fall into fighting, then make peace between the two. But if one party oppresses the other, then fight you [all] the oppressing party until it returns to the ordinance of Allāh. And if it returns, then make peace between them in justice and act equitably. Indeed, Allāh loves those who act equitably. The believers are but brothers. Therefore, make peace between your brethren. And fear Allāh, that you may receive mercy. (al-Ḥujurāt: 9, 10).

We could see in the above verses that despite the reference to both parties as having committed the sin of waging unnecessary war against each other, which of course amounts to a grave offence, and to one of them as an oppressor, Allāh (ﷻ) qualified both parties as 'believers', referring to them as 'brothers'. Furthermore, He even ordered the rest of the Muslim community to bring about reconciliation between their warring brothers in Faith.

The *Sunnah* proofs in this respect include a narration by Abū Sa'īd al-Khudri (ﷺ) that the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said,

(يُدخل الله أهل الجنة الجنة، يدخل من يشاء برحمته، ويدخل أهل النار النار ثم يقول: انظروا من وجدتم في قلبه مثقال حبّة من خردل من إيمان فأخرجوه ...).

Allāh will cause the people of Paradise to enter Paradise- He will admit into it whomever He wishes out of His Mercy. He will also cause the people of Hellfire to enter it, and then say, 'Check [if

there is] anyone [in Hell] who has in his heart Faith equal to the weight of a grain of mustard seed, and let him/her come out...' (*Muslim*: 184[1]).

This *ḥadīth* points out that those perpetrators of grave offences who are Muslims will not be banished to live permanently in the Fire, as anyone with even the slightest degree of Faith will eventually be set free from Hell. Similarly, the *ḥadīth* indicates that the believers are never at a par; some are raised above the others, based on the nature or amount of their righteous deeds. However, Faith itself deepens or weakens on the basis of obligatory acts neglected, or forbidden actions perpetrated.

1- The *ḥadīth* occurs in the book of Īmān, chapter of 'Intercession and Drawing the Monotheists out of the Fire'.

1.3 Excellent performance of devotional acts (*Al- Iḥsān*):

Definition: *Al-Iḥsān* means being dutiful to Allāh (ﷻ) both in private and in public, as one who loves and fear Him, hopes for His reward, and is afraid of His punishment. This is accomplished through performance of obligatory and supererogatory rituals, as well as abstaining not only from prohibited acts but also from detestable ones. Those who posses the quality of Iḥsān are the foremost in good deeds, who strive earnestly in performing meritorious acts.

Proofs from the Qur'ān and the *Sunnah*

Allāh (ﷻ) says,

﴿ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ مَعَ ٱلَّذِينَ ٱتَّقَوا۟ وَّٱلَّذِينَ هُم مُّحْسِنُونَ ﴾.

Truly, Allāh is with those who fear [Him] and those who are *muhsinūn* [i.e. those who posses the quality of *Iḥsān*]. (al-Naḥl: 128).

The proof of this from the *Sunnah* is demonstrated in the text of the *ḥadīth* of Jibrīl (ﷺ), when he asked the Prophet (ﷺ) to tell him what exactly the word *Iḥsān* stands for. The Prophet (ﷺ) answered saying,

(أن تعبد الله كأنك تراه فإن لم تكن تراه فإنه يراك).

To worship Allāh as if you were [physically] seeing Him, for even though you do not see Him, He definitely sees you[1].

1- The *ḥadīth* has been mentioned earlier on p. 155.

1.4 Relation between *Islam, Īmān* (Faith) and *Iḥsān* (Excellent performance of devotional acts)

The three terms occurred in the *ḥadīth* of Jibrīl, who came to the Prophet (ﷺ) purposefully to inquire about these issues. The Prophet (ﷺ) in his response described 'Islam' as compliance with outward religious obligations. Such as bearing witness that none but Allāh alone deserves to be worshipped and that Muḥammad is a messenger of Allāh, establishing prayer (*Ṣalāh*), paying the obligatory alms (*Zakah*), fasting in the month of Ramaḍān and Ḥajj (the pilgrimage) to the Sacred House in Makkah. He also explained the nature of Faith (Īmān) as being a hidden matter, involving the belief in Allāh, His angels, His Books, His Messengers, the Last Day and Preordainment, whether favourable or unfavourable. Furthermore, his answer concerning 'Iḥsān' shows that this implies being fearful of Allāh, both in secret and in public; hence his statement, **"That you worship Allāh as if you were seeing Him. Even though you do not see Him, but He, surely, sees you"**.

Whenever the three terms are jointly mentioned, giving a distinctive meaning to each becomes a necessity. Thus, the word 'Islam' stands for outward obligations, 'Īman' represents private or inner issues and '*Iḥsān*' implies the highest degree of servitude to Allāh. However, whenever each term is used exclusively, the first two (i.e. Islam and *Īmān*) become synonyms and can be used interchangeably, while '*Iḥsān*', in this respect, embraces the concept of both.

Chapter Two: Meaning and Norms of *Al- walā'* (Alliance) and *Al- barā'* (Disavowal) in Islam

2.1 Definition:

Al-walā', a verbal noun of '*waliya*', is an Arabic word denoting an approach to something. It therefore, suggests, in this context, drawing near to fellow Muslims through love and support for them. It further implies living in their midst, as well as standing by them against their enemy.

Al-barā' is also a verbal noun of '*bara'*', meaning to cut something. It is therefore commonly said, '*Bara al-qalam*a', that is, he chopped off a pen. The meaning in relation to our topic would therefore be to cut off ties with the infidels. Hence, one neither loves nor supports them, and should even restrict his/her sojourn in their land to cases of necessity alone.

2.2 *Al-walā'* and *Al-barā'* as prerequisites of *Tawḥīd:*

A Muslim must see the cause of Allāh as the real criterion for either his love or closeness to someone, or his enmity and hatred for another. Thus, he loves and supports his fellow Muslims, as he does the opposite with the infidels. Allāh (ﷻ) says,

﴿ إِنَّمَا وَلِيُّكُمُ اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا الَّذِينَ يُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَيُؤْتُونَ الزَّكَاةَ وَهُمْ رَاكِعُونَ (٥٥) وَمَن يَتَوَلَّ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا فَإِنَّ حِزْبَ اللَّهِ هُمُ الْغَالِبُونَ ﴾.

Your ally is none but Allāh and [therefore] His Messenger and those who believe -those who establish prayer and give obligatory

charity (*zakāh*), and they bow [in worship]. And whoever is an ally of Allāh and His Messenger and those who believe- indeed, it is the party of Allāh that will triumph. (al-Mā'idah: 55,56).

﴿ يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ لَا تَتَّخِذُواْ ٱلْيَهُودَ وَٱلنَّصَٰرَىٰٓ أَوْلِيَآءَ بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلِيَآءُ بَعْضٍ ۚ وَمَن يَتَوَلَّهُم مِّنكُمْ فَإِنَّهُۥ مِنْهُمْ ۗ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ لَا يَهْدِى ٱلْقَوْمَ ٱلظَّٰلِمِينَ ﴾.

O you who believe, do not take the Jews and the Christians as allies. They are [in fact] allies of one another. And whoever is an ally to them among you, then indeed, he is [one] of them. Truly, Allāh does not guide the wrongdoing people. (al-Mā'idah: 51).

﴿ لَّا تَجِدُ قَوْمًا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِٱللَّهِ وَٱلْيَوْمِ ٱلْءَاخِرِ يُوَآدُّونَ مَنْ حَآدَّ ٱللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُۥ وَلَوْ كَانُوٓاْ ءَابَآءَهُمْ أَوْ أَبْنَآءَهُمْ أَوْ إِخْوَٰنَهُمْ أَوْ عَشِيرَتَهُمْ ﴾.

You will not find a people who believe in Allāh and the Last Day having affection for those who oppose Allāh and His Messenger, even if they were their fathers or their sons or their brothers or their kindred. (al-Mujādilah: 22).

It is clear in the light of the above quoted Qur'ānic verses that a Muslim is duty bound to love and stand by his fellow Muslims, and to treat as enemy whoever treads the path of disbelief. Similarly, these verses shed light on gains of this mutual love and support that Muslims should have for one another, as well as the dangers of taking the disbelievers as allies.

2.3 The position of *Al-walā'* and *Al-barā'* in Islam:

The doctrine of *Al-walā'* and *Al-barā'* occupies in Islam a high position, as it is believed to be the strongest of all the bonds of Faith.

In other words, it indicates strengthening the love and intimacy that bind the Muslim community, and severing ties with the antagonists of Islam. According to Ibn 'Abbās (رضي الله عنهما), Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said,

(أوثق عرى الإيمان الموالاة في الله والمعاداة في الله والحب في الله والبغض في الله).

The strongest of all the bonds of Faith is to stay attached to someone or set oneself against him/her; love or hate him/her, all fro the sake of Allāh and based on His injunction. (al-Ṭabarānī, *al-Mu'jam al-Kabir* vol. xi p. 215; al-Baghawi, *Sharḥu al-Sunnah* vol. iii p. 429, both with a fairly reliable chain of transmission).

2.4 The difference between sycophancy and pliancy, and the bearing of both on the concept of *Al-walā'* and *Al-barā'*

Sycophancy, in this context, means that one willingly forsakes the duty of enjoining virtues and forbidding vices; exonerates himself from all that is expected of him as a Muslim, in terms of vigilant care and concern for his religion, on account of flattering the disbelieving and disobedient folk in order to secure certain worldly material gains.

An example of this is when a person maintains an intimate friendship with either the infidels or those who practise and promote vices, socializing carelessly with them, even as they keep insisting on their bad habits or disbelief, while he makes no effort to prevent them from so doing, despite being capable of this. Allāh (ﷻ) says,

﴿ لُعِنَ ٱلَّذِينَ كَفَرُواْ مِنۢ بَنِيٓ إِسۡرَٰٓءِيلَ عَلَىٰ لِسَانِ دَاوُۥدَ وَعِيسَى ٱبۡنِ مَرۡيَمَۚ ذَٰلِكَ بِمَا عَصَواْ وَّكَانُواْ يَعۡتَدُونَ ۝٧٨ كَانُواْ لَا يَتَنَاهَوۡنَ عَن مُّنكَرٖ فَعَلُوهُۚ لَبِئۡسَ مَا كَانُواْ يَفۡعَلُونَ ۝٧٩ تَرَىٰ كَثِيرٗا مِّنۡهُمۡ يَتَوَلَّوۡنَ ٱلَّذِينَ كَفَرُواْۚ ﴾

Cursed were those who disbelieved among the Children of Israel by the tongue of Dawūd (David) and of 'Īsa the son of Maryam (Jesus the son of Mary). That was because they disobeyed and were ever transgressing. They used not to prevent one another from wrongdoing that they did. Evil indeed was what they were doing. You see many of them becoming allies of those who disbelieved... (al-Mā'idah: 78-80).

Pliancy, however, is to ward off or prevent an evil in a courteous manner, without being harsh to the culprit or turning away from him, especially if one is scared of the person's wickedness, or fears that he may even do more harm to him or to his mission. This includes showing leniency either to an ignorant fellow who is under one's tutelage, or to a vicious person whose acts we are to warn against. We should not prove uncivil to him, but, instead, employ polite and refined methods in this regard, especially if there is a need to reconcile with such a person.

'Āisha (رضي الله عنها) narrated the story of a man who asked permission to enter to the Prophet (ﷺ). When the Prophet (ﷺ) saw him he said, **"What an evil brother of the tribe; what an evil son of the tribe"!** However, when the man eventually [came in and] sat down, the Prophet (ﷺ) behaved with him in a nice and polite manner, and was completely at ease with him. After the man had left, 'Āisha

(رضي الله عنها) said, 'O Messenger of Allāh, when you first saw the man you said so and so. Then, you [surprisingly] treated him so politely and enjoyed his company'! The Prophet (ﷺ) said,

(يا عائشة متى عهدتني فحاشاً، إن شر الناس عند الله منـــزلة يوم القيامة من تركه النـــاس اتقاء شره).

O 'Āisha, have you ever seen me using bad or dirty language? The worst person in the sight of Allāh on the Day of Resurrection will be he that people leave [undisturbed] to save themselves from his evil. (*Bukhāri*: 6032).

The Prophet (ﷺ), therefore, for the benefit of religion, behaved with the man courteously and politely when he entered to him, despite the man's bad reputation. This, accordingly, suggests that pliancy and alliance or loyalty may run parallel to each other, in as much as that results in significant advantages. Such advantages may include harmonization, total prevention of an evil or, at least, reduction or alleviation of its bearing.

This, on the other hand, is an impeccable method of calling people to the path of Allāh (ﷻ). The Prophet (ﷺ) himself has set an example in this respect by dealing politely with the hypocrites in Madinah just to eschew their evil, and to endear himself to them and to others.

However, what has been stated above is different from sycophancy, which, in essence, means currying favour with sinners or wrongdoers for the sake of material gain and not for any religious interest. Sycophancy is therefore not permissible in Islam.

2.5 (Historical) models of compliance with the notion of *Al-walā' and Al-Barā'*:

Allāh (ﷻ) related the story of Prophet Ibrāhīm (عليه السلام) as follows,

﴿ قَدْ كَانَتْ لَكُمْ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ فِىٓ إِبْرَٰهِيمَ وَٱلَّذِينَ مَعَهُۥٓ إِذْ قَالُوا۟ لِقَوْمِهِمْ إِنَّا بُرَءَٰٓؤُا۟ مِنكُمْ وَمِمَّا تَعْبُدُونَ مِن دُونِ ٱللَّهِ كَفَرْنَا بِكُمْ وَبَدَا بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَكُمُ ٱلْعَدَٰوَةُ وَٱلْبَغْضَآءُ أَبَدًا حَتَّىٰ تُؤْمِنُوا۟ بِٱللَّهِ وَحْدَهُۥٓ ﴾.

There has been for you an excellent example in Ibrāhīm and those with him, when they said to their people, 'Indeed, we are dissociated from you and from whatever you worship other than Allāh. We have denied you, and there has appeared between us and you enmity and hatred forever, until you believe in Allāh alone'. (al-Mumtaḥanah: 4).

Also, Allāh gives us a glimpse of how the Anṣār[1] in Madinah stood by their brothers in Faith, the Emigrants from Makkah (*Muhājirūn*), saying,

﴿ وَٱلَّذِينَ تَبَوَّءُو ٱلدَّارَ وَٱلْإِيمَٰنَ مِن قَبْلِهِمْ يُحِبُّونَ مَنْ هَاجَرَ إِلَيْهِمْ وَلَا يَجِدُونَ فِى صُدُورِهِمْ حَاجَةً مِّمَّآ أُوتُوا۟ وَيُؤْثِرُونَ عَلَىٰٓ أَنفُسِهِمْ وَلَوْ كَانَ بِهِمْ خَصَاصَةٌ وَمَن يُوقَ شُحَّ نَفْسِهِۦ فَأُو۟لَٰٓئِكَ هُمُ ٱلْمُفْلِحُونَ ﴾.

And those who, before them, settled in the home [i.e. Madinah] and had adopted Faith. They love those who emigrated to them, and have no jealousy in their breasts for things given to them [i.e. the Emigrants]. But [also] give them preference over themselves, even though they are in privation. And whoever is protected from the stinginess of his soul– it is those who are the successful. (al-Ḥashr: 9).

1- Literally, the helpers.

2.6 The ruling concerning being an ally of sinners and innovators:

If a person is found to posses paradoxical qualities of either good and evil, obedience and disobedience, or following the way (*Sunnah*) of the Prophet (ﷺ) and introducing innovations (*Bid'ah*) in religion, such a person should be considered as deserving his due friendship, alliance and Allāh's reward on the one hand, as well his due hostility and Allāh's punishment on the other; each in accordance with the extent he/she has gone in observing or perpetrating such acts. This itself is not abnormal, for we could similarly find a person who earns honour for a reason, but deserves to be humiliated on account of another. A poor or poverty-stricken thief, for instance, may have his/her hand cut off for stealing (in accordance with the law of Islam), but may also be considered for a grant that will satisfy his need from the public treasury, or perhaps receive charity from his fellow Muslims. This principle is, therefore, an object of agreement among the people of *Sunnah* and *Jamā'ah* (The Orthodox Sunni Muslims).

2.7 Do worldly transactions with disbelievers have anything to do with the precept of *Al-walā'* and *Al-barā'*?

In the light of the authentic proofs, dealing with non-Muslims in trade or other business transactions is permissible in Islam. It is, similarly, unerring to appoint them as aides in case there is need for that, or when it becomes inevitable to do so. However, this must be done on a small-scale and should not pose a threat either to Islam or the Muslims.

It is worth mentioning here that the Prophet (ﷺ) himself engaged the services of 'Abdullah bin Uraiqit[1] as an expert guide[2], and even mortgaged his shield to a Jew, so that the latter would lend him a *ṣā'* [3] of barleycorn. Similarly, 'Ali (ﷺ) hired himself out to a Jewish woman, for whom he drew sixteen buckets of water from a well, taking a date-fruit in exchange for each bucket of water. On another occasion, the Prophet (ﷺ) asked for the help of the then Jewish Community in Madinah to fight the polytheists. He also got assistance from the *Khuzā'ah* tribe in his campaign against the disbelievers of his own clan, *Quraish*. All of these instances have no negative impact on the notion of *Al-walā'* and *Al-barā'*. However, it should be added that non-Muslims residing in a Muslim community must comply with general (Islamic-defined) standards of behaviour, and should not engage in any invitation to their religion.

1- Who was a disbeliever. Cf. *Fatḥu al-Bāri*, vol. iv, pp. 517, 518. (Translator)

2- As reported in *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhāri*, *ḥadīth* no. 2263.

3- *Ṣā'* is an old-fashioned measure. A *ṣā'* is equivalent to 2, 172 grams. Cf. Qal'aji, M, *Mu'jam Lughat al-Fuqahā'* (Dictionary of Islamic Legal Terms), p. 419. (Translator)

Chapter Three: The Due Rights of the Prophet's Companions (Ṣaḥābah)

3.1 Who are the Companions of the Prophet (ﷺ)? Our duty to love and support them.

3.2 The necessity of holding them in high esteem and as persons with undoubted probity, as well as refraining from [unnecessary discussion of] their disputes. All in the light of Islamic proofs.

3.3 The Prophet's relations and their rights; his wives being part and parcel of his household.

3.4 The Rightly Guided Caliphs: their virtues, rights and hierarchical order.

3.5 The ten [Companions] who received, in advance, glad tidings of their admittance into Paradise.

3.1 Who are the Companions of the Prophet (ﷺ)? Our duty to love and support them

3.1.1 Definition:

A companion of the Prophet (ﷺ) is anyone who has met him (physically during his lifetime). Such a person must be a Muslim at the time of that meeting, and must have died, also, as a Muslim.

3.1.2 Our duty to love and support the Companions of the Prophet (ﷺ)

The Companions are the best generation, the cream of the entire Muslim nation, and with the exception of the Prophet (ﷺ), they are also the best thereof. We are duty bound to support them, love them, and ask Allāh to be pleased with them. We must also place them in their befitting status. Every Muslim is bound to love them, as that itself is part of our religion and Faith, which also constitutes an act that could bring one closer to Allāh, the Most Merciful. Conversely, harbouring hatred against them is considered an act of infidelity and tyranny.

Any slander or defamation of the Companions is in fact a challenge of the authority of the religion as a whole. The reason is that they were the bearers of the religion, through whom we knew of it in the first instance, after they had received it fresh, verbally, from the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ). They have also passed its contents to us honestly and sincerely, and disseminated its message to [virtually] every nook and cranny of the universe in less than a quarter of one century. Through their efforts, Allāh (ﷻ) subjected many cities of the

world to the rule of Islam, and people thereby entered the religion of Allāh (Islam) in crowds.

Both the Glorious Qur'ān and the *Sunnah* have described the love and support for the Companions as not only an obligation, but also an indication of a man's sincerity in his Faith. Allāh (ﷻ) says,

﴿ وَٱلْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَٱلْمُؤْمِنَٰتُ بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلِيَآءُ بَعْضٍ ﴾.

The believers, men and women, are allies of one another. (al-Tawbah: 71).

No doubt, the Companions are believers – and of course, on account of Allāh (ﷻ) and His Messenger's recommendation, they are even the best of the believers. Having said this, it logically follows that showing love and support for them amounts to proof of Faith on the part of whoever loves or supports them.

Furthermore, Anas (ﷺ) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) has also said,

(آية الإيمان حب الأنصار، وآية النفاق بغض الأنصار).

The sign of Faith is to love the Anṣār[1]**, while the sign of hypocrisy is to abhor the Anṣār.** (*Bukhārī*: 17).

The Islamic texts relating to this issue are many, and cannot all be mentioned here. Nevertheless, we deem it fit to point out at this juncture some benefits of being an ally of the Companions of the Prophet (ﷺ), both in this life and in the life to come. We are stating

1- i.e. those of the Prophet's Companions who played host to the Emigrants (*al-Muhājirūn*) in Madinah. (Translator)

this with the hope that it may further arouse the readers' interest in pursuing this goal.

Prosperity and victory are some of these benefits in this life. Allāh (ﷻ) says,

﴿ وَمَن يَتَوَلَّ ٱللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُۥ وَٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا۟ فَإِنَّ حِزْبَ ٱللَّهِ هُمُ ٱلْغَٰلِبُونَ ﴾.

And whoever is an ally of Allāh and His Messenger and those who believe- indeed, it is the party of Allāh that will triumph. (al-Mā'idah: 56).

Ibn Kathīr, the famous scholar of Qur'ānic exegesis said, "Whoever is pleased with the alliance, friendship and help of Allāh, His Messenger and the faithful- he/she will prosper in this world and in the hereafter, and will be helped, as well, in both".

Another benefit of having affection for the Companions, in the life to come, lies in the hope that those who love them will be assembled with them on the Day of Resurrection. The Prophet (ﷺ) has given a hint of this when, according to Ibn Mas'ūd (ﷺ), a man came to him and said, 'O Allāh's Messenger! What would you say of a man who loves a certain group of people, but has not yet caught up with them'? The Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) replied,

(المرء مع من أحب).

A man is with whom he loves. (*Muslim*: 2640).

For this reason, the Companions of the Prophet (ﷺ) used to seek nearness to Allāh or His favour through their love for Abūbakr and 'Umar (رضي الله عنهما), and even regarded that as one of their best and most promising deeds in the sight of Allāh. According to

Bukhāri's compilation of the *ḥadīth,* Anas bin Mālik (ﷺ) narrated that a man once asked the Prophet (ﷺ) about the Hour of Resurrection and said, 'When will the Hour come to pass"? The Prophet (ﷺ) said to the man, "[But] **what have you in preparation for that"?** He said, 'Nothing, except that I love Allāh and His Messenger'. Then the Prophet (ﷺ) said,

(أنت مع من أحببت).

You will be with whom you have loved.

Anas bin Mālik [the narrator] remarked, "At no time had we been as happy as we were that day, on hearing the saying of the Prophet (ﷺ) that, **'You will be with whom you have loved'**." Anas continued, 'I love the Prophet (ﷺ), Abūbakr and 'Umar, and, on the strength of my love for them, I hope to be with them, even though I may perform less than they have done'. (*Bukhāri*: 3688).

3.2 The necessity of holding the Companions in high esteem and as persons with undoubted probity, as well as refraining from [unnecessary discussion of] their disputes. All in the light of Islamic proofs

3.2.1 The excellent quality of the Companions

Allāh (ﷻ) commended the Prophet's Companions, promised them the best reward and was pleased with them. Thus, He says,

﴿وَالسَّابِقُونَ الْأَوَّلُونَ مِنَ الْمُهَاجِرِينَ وَالْأَنصَارِ وَالَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُوهُم بِإِحْسَانٍ رَّضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ وَرَضُوا عَنْهُ وَأَعَدَّ لَهُمْ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي تَحْتَهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا أَبَدًا ذَٰلِكَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ﴾.

And the first forerunners [in Faith] among the *Muhājirūn* and the *Anṣār* and those who followed them [in Faith] truly and accurately, Allāh is pleased with them and they [too] are pleased with Him, and He has prepared for them gardens [Paradise] under which rivers flow, wherein they will dwell forever. That is the supreme success. (al-Tawbah: 100).

﴿لَّقَدْ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِذْ يُبَايِعُونَكَ تَحْتَ الشَّجَرَةِ﴾.

Certainly, Allāh was pleased with the believers when they pledged allegiance to you [i.e. Muḥammad] under the Tree. (al-Fatḥ: 18).

﴿لِلْفُقَرَاءِ الْمُهَاجِرِينَ الَّذِينَ أُخْرِجُوا مِن دِيَارِهِمْ وَأَمْوَالِهِمْ يَبْتَغُونَ فَضْلًا مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَرِضْوَانًا وَيَنصُرُونَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الصَّادِقُونَ ﴿٨﴾ وَالَّذِينَ تَبَوَّءُوا الدَّارَ وَالْإِيمَانَ مِن قَبْلِهِمْ يُحِبُّونَ مَنْ هَاجَرَ إِلَيْهِمْ وَلَا يَجِدُونَ فِي صُدُورِهِمْ حَاجَةً مِّمَّا أُوتُوا وَيُؤْثِرُونَ عَلَىٰ أَنفُسِهِمْ وَلَوْ كَانَ بِهِمْ خَصَاصَةٌ وَمَن يُوقَ شُحَّ نَفْسِهِ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ ﴿٩﴾ وَالَّذِينَ جَاءُوا مِن بَعْدِهِمْ يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا اغْفِرْ لَنَا وَلِإِخْوَانِنَا الَّذِينَ سَبَقُونَا بِالْإِيمَانِ وَلَا تَجْعَلْ فِي قُلُوبِنَا غِلًّا لِّلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا رَبَّنَا إِنَّكَ رَءُوفٌ رَّحِيمٌ﴾.

For the indigent Emigrants who were expelled from their homes and their property, while seeking bounty from Allāh and His pleasure, and helping Allāh [i.e. His religion] and His Messenger. Those are the truthful. And those who, before them, settled in the home [i.e. Madīnah] and had adopted Faith. They love those who emigrated to them, and have no jealousy in their breasts for things given to them [i.e. the Emigrants]. But [also] give them preference over themselves, even though they are in privation. And whoever is protected from the stinginess of his soul, it is those who are the successful. And those who came after them, they say 'Our Lord, forgive us and our brothers who preceded us in Faith, and put not in our hearts rancour against those who have believed. Our Lord, indeed You are Most Kind, Most Merciful'. (al-Ḥashr: 8, 9 and 10).

The above quoted Qur'ānic verses manifest the excellent qualities of the Companions and how [Allāh] has commended them. Whether they were of the Emigrants (*Muhājirūn*), or the Helpers (*Anṣār*), those who partook in the Battle of Badr, those who were present in the *Riḍwān* pledge of allegiance that took place under the Tree or whoever had the privilege of being a Companion of the Prophet (ﷺ). The verses continued by describing the succeeding generations (after the Companions) as those who seek Allāh's forgiveness for their predecessors among the Companions, and beseech Him to keep off their hearts any resentment towards their fellow believers.

Those Qur'ānic verses and many other similar ones also contain references to asking Allāh (ﷻ) to be pleased with the Companions, the glad tidings of their admittance into Paradise, their attainment of the supreme success, and speaking highly of them. Furthermore, the verses mention some of their qualities, such as their love for others, unselfishness, generosity, and love for their Muslim brothers. Also mentioned is their support for the religion of Allāh and other great qualities and good repute, all of which they rightly deserve.

Likewise, the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) has given credit to the Companions in a number of *ḥadīths,* including the one reported by Muslim on the authority of Jābir bin 'Abdullah (رضي الله عنهما) who quoted the Prophet (ﷺ) as saying,

(لا يدخل النار أحدٌ بايع تحت الشجرة).

None of those who pledged allegiance [to me] under the Tree shall enter the Fire. (*Muslim*: 2496).

There are *ḥadīths* speaking generally of the virtues of all the Companions, while some others focus on the heroes of *Badr*. There are still other *ḥadīths* mentioning precisely excellent qualities of certain individuals among the Companions.

The duty of every Muslim is, therefore, to practically apply those *ḥadīths,* assuming every Companion of the Prophet (ﷺ) as deserving his love and support. He should also invoke Allāh to be pleased with them, speak highly of them, follow their examples and let their way of life be his guiding principles.

3.2.2 Refraining from [unnecessary discussion of] the Companions' differences, and the Islamic ruling with respect to abusing or insulting them

We must have known from the foregoing that the Companions are, with the exception of our Prophet (ﷺ), the elite of this Muslim nation (*ummah*) and the best thereof; they were the first among this nation to embrace Islam. They are landmarks of guidance, and lights where and when there is darkness. They strove hard in Allāh's cause as they ought to have striven, and fought courageously in defending the interest of Islam, until Allāh (ﷻ), through their efforts, established the religion (Islam) firmly. Hence, whoever dispraises or insults them, or belittle anyone of them- he is one of the most evil of all creation, whose action amounts to an assault against the religion as a whole.

Anyone who dares to accuse the Companions of unbelief or apostasy is himself, with even more reason, an infidel or apostate. Quite evidently, no matter the amount of devotional acts anyone coming after the generation of the Companions may embark on, he/she can never rise to their calibre. Both Bukhāri and Muslim reported in their authentic *ḥadīth* compilations that Abū Sa'īd al-Khudri (ﷺ) quoted Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) as saying,

(لا تسبوا أحداً من أصحابي، فإن أحدكم لو أنفق مثل أحد ذهباً ما أدرك مُدَّ أحـــدهم ولا نصيفه).

Do not abuse any of my Companions; for if one of you spent gold equal to the *Uḥud* mountain [in Allāh's cause], that would not be

equal to a *mud*[1] or even half a *mud* spent by one of them. (*Bukhārī*: 3673; *Muslim*: 2540, 2541). This *ḥadīth* is a proof forbidding anyone to abuse or insult the Companions of Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ). Furthermore, it stresses that nobody can reach their status, no matter what amount of righteous acts he/she may perform.

Every Muslim must, therefore, believe in the integrity of the Companions, and ask Allāh to be pleased with them. Likewise, he should shun any interest in taking up the controversial matters among them. Rather, he should leave their secrets or intentions for Allāh alone to decide. 'Umar bin 'Abdul 'Azīz, a prominent Muslim leader and scholar of the *Tābi'īn* generation has said, "Those [i.e. the Companions] were people Allāh had saved our hands from being stained with their blood. We should, therefore, restrain our tongues from speaking evil of their honour or dignity".

In a nutshell, *Ahl al-Sunnah* (the Orthodox Sunni Muslims) love and support all Companions of the Prophet (ﷺ). They also place them in their rightful positions with every sense of justice and fairness, and not with mere fancy or partiality, which is but a transgression.

1- A *mud* is equal to 543 grams. Cf. Qal'ajī, M. op. cit., p. 419. (Translator)

3.3 The Prophet's relations (*Ahl al-Bayt*)

3.3.1 Who are the *Ahl al-Bayt*?

Ahl al-Bayt are those of the kindred of the Prophet (ﷺ) whom Allāh forbade to take alms. They are the families of 'Ali bin Abi Ṭālib, Ja'far and al-'Abbās, the descendants of al-Ḥārith bin 'Abdul Muṭṭalib, as well as the wives of the Prophet (ﷺ).

3.3.2 Proofs on virtues of the Prophet's family:

These include the saying of Almighty Allāh that,

﴿إِنَّمَا يُرِيدُ ٱللَّهُ لِيُذْهِبَ عَنكُمُ ٱلرِّجْسَ أَهْلَ ٱلْبَيْتِ وَيُطَهِّرَكُمْ تَطْهِيرًا﴾.

Allāh intends only to remove from you the impurity [of sin], O members of the [Prophet's] household, and to purify you thoroughly. (al-Aḥzāb: 33).

The Prophet (ﷺ) has also said,

(أذكركم الله في أهل بيتي).

I remind you [to fear] Allāh, by giving my relations [a befitting treatment]. (*Muslim*: 2408).

3.3.3 The wives of the Prophet (ﷺ) as part and parcel of his household

Allāh (ﷻ) says,

﴿يَٰنِسَآءَ ٱلنَّبِيِّ لَسْتُنَّ كَأَحَدٍ مِّنَ ٱلنِّسَآءِ ۚ إِنِ ٱتَّقَيْتُنَّ فَلَا تَخْضَعْنَ بِٱلْقَوْلِ فَيَطْمَعَ ٱلَّذِى فِى قَلْبِهِۦ مَرَضٌ وَقُلْنَ قَوْلًا مَّعْرُوفًا ﴿٣٢﴾ وَقَرْنَ فِى بُيُوتِكُنَّ وَلَا تَبَرَّجْنَ تَبَرُّجَ ٱلْجَٰهِلِيَّةِ ٱلْأُولَىٰ ۖ وَأَقِمْنَ ٱلصَّلَوٰةَ وَءَاتِينَ ٱلزَّكَوٰةَ وَأَطِعْنَ ٱللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُۥٓ ۚ إِنَّمَا يُرِيدُ ٱللَّهُ لِيُذْهِبَ عَنكُمُ ٱلرِّجْسَ أَهْلَ ٱلْبَيْتِ وَيُطَهِّرَكُمْ تَطْهِيرًا ﴿٣٣﴾ وَٱذْكُرْنَ مَا يُتْلَىٰ فِى بُيُوتِكُنَّ مِنْ ءَايَٰتِ ٱللَّهِ وَٱلْحِكْمَةِ ۚ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ كَانَ لَطِيفًا خَبِيرًا﴾.

O wives of the Prophet, you are not like any other woman. If you fear Allāh, then do not be soft in speech [to men], lest he in whose heart is a disease [of hypocrisy or evil desire of fornication] should covet, but speak with appropriate speech. And abide in your houses, and do not display yourselves as was the display of the former times of ignorance. And establish prayer and give obligatory alms (*Zakāh*) and obey Allāh and His Messenger. Allāh intends only to remove from you the impurity [of sin], O members of the [Prophet's] household, and to purify you thoroughly. And remember that which is recited in your houses of the verses of Allāh [i.e. the Qur'ān] and the wisdom [i.e. the *Sunnah*]. Indeed, Allāh is ever Courteous, Well-Acquainted [with all things]. (al-Aḥzāb: 32, 33 and 34).

Imam Ibn Kathīr commented on the meaning of the above verses saying, "A certain point concerning which anyone who reflects on [the meaning of] the Qur'ān shall have no doubt is that the wives of the Prophet (ﷺ) are included in the saying of Allāh (ﷻ), **"Allāh intends only to remove from you the impurity [of sin], O members of the [Prophet's] household, and to purify you thoroughly"**. In fact, they were the ones being addressed in this context; hence, Allāh said in the close of it, **"And remember that which is recited in your houses of the verses of Allāh and the wisdom"**. That is to say, in other words, "Give practical effect to what is being sent down by Allāh (ﷻ) to His Messenger, while in your houses, of the Qur'ān and the *Sunnah*". Thus, Qatādah and some

other notable scholars gave the meaning of this last mentioned verse as, "Remember this favour [of Allāh] with which you have been distinguished from all other women[1]".

3.3.4 The [Prophet 's] bidding with respect to his relations

As mentioned above, Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) has said,

(أذكّركم الله في أهل بيتي).

I remind you [to fear] Allāh, by giving my relations [a befitting treatment]. (*Muslim*: 2408).

The *Ahl al–Sunnah* (Followers of the *Sunnah* or the Orthodox Sunni Muslims), therefore, love and honour the family of their Prophet (ﷺ), in keeping to his bidding concerning them. This is even construed as part of their loving and honouring the Prophet (ﷺ), himself. However, being a relative of the Prophet, alone, is not enough to merit the Muslim's love or alliance. Rather, such is contingent on the person's (i.e. the member of the Prophet's family) compliance with the *Sunnah*, and his sincere adherence to the law of Islam; just as his ancestors, Al-'Abbās, 'Ali and their offspring had been before.

We could now observe how fair the stance of *Ahl al-Sunnah* (the Orthodox Sunni Muslims) on this issue is. They love and support the upright and the pious among the Prophet's relations, but disavow whoever defies the Prophet's orders and deviates from the religion, even if he were of the household of the Prophet (ﷺ). As mentioned

1- Ibn Kathīr, *al-Tafsīr* vol. vi p. 411.

earlier, being a relative of the Prophet (ﷺ) or a member of his household can never, alone, avail anybody, except if the person is found to be upright in accordance with the law of Islam. Abū Hurairah (ﷺ) narrated saying, When this Qur'ānic verse:

﴿ وَأَنذِرْ عَشِيرَتَكَ ٱلْأَقْرَبِينَ ﴾

And warn [O Muḥammad] your closest kindred. (al-Shu'arā': 214).

was revealed to Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ), he got up and proclaimed,

(يا معشر قريش أو كلمة نحوها، اشتروا أنفسكم لا أغني عنكم من الله شيئاً، يا بني عبد مناف لا أغني عنكم من الله شيئاً، يا صفية عمة رسول الله لا أغني عنك من الله شيئاً، ويا فاطمة بنت محمد سليني ما شئت من مالي لا أغني عنك من الله شيئاً).

O people of Quraish![1] (or perhaps he said another word similar to this) Save yourself [from Hell]; I cannot save you from Allāh's punishment. O Descendants of Abdu Manāf! I cannot save you from Allāh's punishment. O Ṣafiyyah, the aunt of Allāh's Messenger! I cannot save you from Allāh's punishment. O Fāṭimah, the daughter of Muḥammad! Ask me [to give you] anything you like of my property, [but] I cannot save you from Allāh's punishment. (*Bukhārī*: 4771; *Muslim*: 204).

The Prophet (ﷺ) also said in another *ḥadīth*,

(من بطأ به عمله لم يسرع به نسبه).

Anyone whose deed has slowed down [i.e. in the Sight of Allāh], his family relationship cannot speed him up. (*Muslim*: 2699).

1- Quraish is the tribe the Prophet (ﷺ) himself belonged to. (Translator)

Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah (Followers of the *Sunnah* or the Orthodox Sunni Muslims) disown those who exceed proper limits in extolling certain members of the Prophet's family, and even claim that they were infallible. Similarly, *Ahl al-Sunnah* disavow some other groups who either declare themselves enemies of the righteous and upright members of the Prophet's family or speak evil of them. They, equally, wash their hands of the way of the innovators, whose practice is to take the persons of the Prophet's relations as means of approach to Allāh, or even assume them other gods besides Him.

The *Ahl al-Sunnah's* approach to this and other issues is thus moderate and upright, tolerating neither excess nor negligence.

3.4 The Rightly Guided Caliphs (*Al-Khulafā' al-Rāshidūn*) (رضي الله عنهم)

3.4.1 Who are the Rightly Guided Caliphs?

They are: Abūbakr (al-Ṣiddīq), 'Umar bin al-Khaṭṭāb (al-Fārūq), 'Uthmān bin 'Affān (Dhū al-Nūrain) and 'Ali bin Abi Ṭālib (Abu al-Sibṭain). May Allāh please them and be pleased with them.

3.4.2 Their position and the necessity of following their way of life

The *Khulafā' Rāshidūn* (رضي الله عنهم) are the best of the Prophet's Companions, and the rightly guided caliphs who the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) ordered us to follow and to hold fast to their guidance. This has come in a *ḥadīth* narrated by al-'Irbāḍ bin Sāriyah (ﷺ) who quoted the Prophet (ﷺ) as saying,

(أوصيكم بالسمع والطاعة، فإنّه من يعش منكم بعدي فسيرى اختلافاً كثيراً، فعليكم بسنتي وسنة الخلفاء الراشدين المهديين من بعدي، تمسكوا بها وعضوا عليها بالنواجذ، وإياكم ومحدثات الأمور، فإنّ كل بدعة ضلالة).

I instruct you to hear and obey [your leaders]; for whoever among you lives after me shall witness a lot of dissension. So you must hold to my way (*Sunnah*) and that of the Rightly Guided Caliphs [who shall reign] after me. Keep to them and hang on to them. Moreover, beware of newly invented matters [in religion]; every *bid'ah* (innovation in religion) is, indeed, straying from the right path. (Reported in *Musnad Aḥmad,* vol. iv, p. 126-127 and *Sunan Tirmidhi,* vol. vii p. 438 with a sound chain of transmission).

3.4.3 Excellent qualities of the Rightly Guided Caliphs

The Followers of *Sunnah* or Orthodox Sunni Muslims unanimously agree that the Rightly Guided Caliphs must be ranked, in terms of who is superior to whom, according to the order of their assumption of the caliphate: Abūbakr, then 'Umar, then 'Uthmān, then 'Ali (ﷺ). Many *ḥadīths* have been reported regarding their virtues, of which we shall now mention just one for each of them.

As for Abūbakr (ﷺ), the *ḥadīths* mentioning his virtues include the saying of the Prophet (ﷺ) publicly on his pulpit,

(لو كنت متخذاً من أهل الأرض خليلاً، لاتخذت أبا بكر خليلاً. لا يبقين في المسجد خوخة إلا سدت إلا خوخة أبي بكر).

If I were to choose a bosom friend from among those living on the earth, I would have, definitely, chosen Abūbakr as my bosom friend. Leave no wicket in the mosque unclosed, except the wicket of Abūbakr. (*Bukhāri*: 3654; *Muslim*: 2382).

Concerning 'Umar (ﷺ), the Prophet (ﷺ) used to say,

(قد كان في الأمم قبلكم محدّثون، فإن يكن في أمتي أحد فإن عمر بن الخطاب منهم).

Among the nations before you, there used to be people who were divinely inspired [even though they were not Prophets]. If there is any of such persons amongst my followers, 'Umar bin al-Khaṭṭāb must, surely, be one of them. (*Bukhāri*: 3689; *Muslim*: 2398).

Regarding 'Uthmān (ﷺ),'Āishah (رضي الله عنها) narrated in a lengthy *ḥadīth* that, "Abūbakr entered [the house of the Prophet (ﷺ)], then 'Umar, then 'Uthmān. When the Prophet (ﷺ) noticed the presence of 'Uthmān he sat down and adjusted his dress. [Later],

'Āishah (رضي الله عنها) asked the Prophet (ﷺ) of the reason behind his act, and he replied,

(ألا أستحي من رجل تستحي منه الملائكة).

Must I not feel shy before a man whom the angels feel shy before? (*Muslim*: 2401).

With respect to 'Ali (ﷺ), a *ḥadīth* narrated by Sahl bin Sa'd (ﷺ) has it that the Prophet (ﷺ) said on the eve of the famous *Khaibar* military expedition,

(لأعطين الراية غداً رجلاً يحب الله ورسوله، ويحبه الله ورسوله يفتح الله على يديه ... فقال: ادعوا لي علياً ...).

Indeed, I shall give the war-flag tomorrow to a man who loves Allāh and His Messenger, and Allāh and His Messenger love him as well. Under his leadership [as the flag-bearer] will Allāh grant [the Muslims] victory. He then said, **"Send for 'Ali..."** and gave him the flag. And Allāh (ﷻ) granted them victory under his command. (*Bukhāri*: 3702; *Muslim*: 2405).

3.5 The ten [Companions] who received, in advance, glad tidings of their admittance into Paradise

We have seen in the previous pages the high status of the entire Companions of the Prophet (ﷺ) and their being upright. Having explained also that some of them are superior to others, it should be noticed that the forerunners who were the first to embrace Islam among the Emigrants (*Muhājirūn*), then the Helpers (*Anṣār*) are the best class of the Companions, followed by the warriors of the Battles of Badr, Uḥud and Aḥzāb[1] respectively. After them, there are the participants in the *Riḍwān* pledge of allegiance, then, as a general rule, those who had migrated and fought in Allāh's cause before the Conquest of Makkah are higher in rank than those who spent of their wealth and fought afterwards. However, to both parties Allāh has promised the best reward.

The best of all Companions are the Rightly Guided Caliphs: Abū-bakr, 'Umar, 'Uthmān and 'Ali (ﷺ). Then, 'Abdul Raḥmān bin 'Awf; al-Zubair bin al-'Awām, the *ḥawari* (disciple) of Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ); and Ṭalḥah bin 'Ubaid-Allāh. Others are Sa'd bin Abi Waqqāṣ; the Trustee of this Muslim nation, Abū 'Ubaidah bin al-Jarrāḥ; and Sa'īd bin Zaid bin Nufail, may Allāh be pleased with them all.

There are *ḥadīths* mentioning virtues of all of these ten Companions together, while in some other *ḥadīths* that has been

1- i.e. the Battle of Trench or the Confederates. (Translator)

restricted to some of them alone. One of those *ḥadīths* that state generally virtues of all the ten was reported by Aḥmad and the authors of the *Sunnan*[1], on the authority of 'Abdul Raḥmān bin al-Akhnas who quoted Sa'īd bin Zayd (ﷺ) as saying, "I testify that I heard the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) saying,

(عشرة في الجنة، النبي في الجنة، وأبو بكر في الجنة، وعمر في الجنة، وعثمان في الجنة، وعلي في الجنة، وطلحة في الجنة، والزبير بن العوام في الجنة، وسعد بن مالك في الجنة، وعبدالرحمن بن عوف في الجنة)، ولو شئت لسميت العاشر. قال: فقالوا: من هو؟ فسكت قال: فقالوا: من هو؟ فقال: (هو سعيد بن زيد).

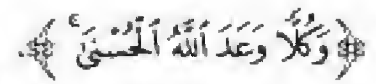
Ten [persons] will be in Paradise. The Prophet will be in Paradise, Abūbakri will be in Paradise, and so will be 'Umar, 'Uthmān, 'Ali, Ṭalḥah, al-Zubair bin al-'Awām, Sa'd bin Mālik and 'Abdul Raḥmān bin 'Awf. Sa'īd, the narrator continued, "Had it been my wish to tell you the tenth person I would have done so. Then, the audience inquired, 'Who is he'? Sa'īd was silent. They inquired again, 'Who is he'? Then he said, "He is Sa'īd bin Zayd[2]". (*Musnad Aḥmad*, vol. i, p. 188 with a sound chain of narration).

In addition to these ten, the Prophet (ﷺ) has equally given the good news of entering Paradise to others among his Companions. Such as 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd, Bilāl bin Rabāḥ, 'Ukāsha bin Miḥṣan, Ja'far bin Abi Ṭālib, and many others. The method the *Ahl al–Sunnah* (Followers of the *Sunnah* or the Orthodox Sunni Muslims) apply in

1- That is, the *ḥadīth* compilations by Abū Dawūd, Tirmidhi, Nasāī and Ibn Mājah. (Translator)

2- That is, the narrator himself. (Translator)

this regard is to mention categorically by name, as an occupant of Paradise, whoever has been marked as such through a textual evidence from Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ). Thus, they testify that such a person will be admitted into Paradise, based on a testimony Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) had given in this regard. However, as for those of them who did not belong to this category the *Ahl al-Sunnah* also hope for them the best, pursuant to the promise that Allāh has made for all of the Prophet's Companions, regarding their being admitted into Paradise. Allāh said after mentioning the Companions and what made some of them superior to others,



And to all Allāh has promised the best [i.e. Paradise]. (al-Nisā': 95).

Regarding other individual Muslims, the *Ahl al-Sunnah* never state definitely that so and so will go to either Paradise or Hell. Rather, they wish that the righteous be rewarded favourably, and fear that the culprits may be liable to punishment. Nevertheless, they hold, with certainty, that whoever breathes his last being a monotheist (a true believer) shall not live permanently in Hell. Allāh (ﷻ) says,

﴿ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ لَا يَغْفِرُ أَن يُشْرَكَ بِهِۦ وَيَغْفِرُ مَا دُونَ ذَٰلِكَ لِمَن يَشَآءُ ﴾.

Indeed, Allāh does not forgive [the sin of] associating partners with Him, but He forgives what is less than that for whom He wills. (al-Nisā': 116).

Chapter Four: Our duty towards the Muslim rulers and the populace, as well as the need to remain united with them

Imam Muslim reported on the authority of Abū Ruqayyah, Tamim al-Ddāri (ﷺ) that the Prophet (ﷺ) said,

(الدين النصيحة، قلنا: لمن يا رسول الله؟ قال: لله ولكتابه ولرسوله ولأئمة المسلمين وعامتهم).

The religion is the *naṣīḥah* [i.e. sincere well-wishing, counsel, admonition, etc.] We (i.e. the audience) said, 'For whom, oh Allāh's Messenger'? He replied, **"For Allāh, His Book, His Messenger and for the Muslims, both rulers and the ruled".** (*Muslim*: 55).

The meaning of 'the *naṣīḥah* for Allāh' is to worship Him alone, exalt Him and fear Him. It also involves hoping for His mercy, loving Him, acting in accordance with His injunctions and abstaining from whatever He has forbidden.

The *naṣīḥah* for His Messenger (ﷺ) entails acceptance of whatever information he has given as true, being obedient to his orders, following his way (*Sunnah*) and making his teachings one's guide in every action and inaction. It also denotes loving him (ﷺ), as well as worshiping Allāh only in the manner he has described.

The *naṣīḥah* for Muslim leaders means supplicating for them, loving them and being obedient to them, in as much as they exceed not the limits laid down by Allāh (ﷻ).

Finally, we offer *naṣīḥah* to the general public of the Muslim nation by enjoining virtues and forbidding vices. Furthermore, we should love for them what we love for our selves of good things, and try to assist them in the best way we could.

Our duty towards the ruling class:

There are proofs from the Glorious Qur'ān, the *Sunnah* and consensus of the worthy predecessors, which describe obedience to an Imām (a Muslim leader or ruler) as an obligation, even if he happens to be a tyrant. This compliance, however, is not without restrictions; hence, a ruler's order should be heeded only when it falls within the limit set by Allāh (ﷻ), but should be neglected in case he goes beyond the limit by ordering what Allāh has forbidden. This is because one must not obey a created being at the expense of his obedience to the Creator.

Moreover, a Muslim must pray behind his ruler (as an Imam leading a congregational Ṣalāh), perform the pilgrimage (Ḥajj) and partake in *Jihād* under his leadership. In matters of discretionary deduction, he should also abide by the ruler's viewpoint. The subjects, and not the rulers, are obliged in this case to concede to the other party; for the public interest, harmony and lack of disunity are more important than any other personal interest. Legal and authorised methods must also be applied while counselling a Muslim leader or ruler, without revolting against him or becoming a rival to him.

Imam al-Ṭaḥāwi, a prominent Muslim scholar said, "We do not approve of rebellion against our leaders and rulers, even if they act

unjustly. We do not invoke Allāh against them, neither do we refuse to obey them. The obedience to them, we believe, is part of the obedience to Allāh that is binding [on all], as long as they command not perpetration of sins. Furthermore, we supplicate to Allāh that He may guide and forgive them".

The proofs of this are numerous, whether in the Glorious Qur'ān or in the *Sunnah*. Allāh (ﷻ) says,

﴿ يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوٓا۟ أَطِيعُوا۟ ٱللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا۟ ٱلرَّسُولَ وَأُو۟لِى ٱلْأَمْرِ مِنكُمْ ﴾.

O you who believe! Obey Allāh, obey the Messenger, and [obey] **those in authority among you.** (al-Nisā': 59).

As for the proof from the *Sunnah*, we have a *ḥadīth* narrated by Abū Hurairah (رضي الله عنه), quoting the Prophet (ﷺ) as saying,

(من أطاعني فقد أطاع الله، ومن عصاني فقد عصى الله، ومن يطع الأمير فقد أطاعني، ومن يعص الأمير فقد عصاني).

Whoever obeys me has thus obeyed Allāh, and whosoever defies my orders has, likewise, disobeyed Allāh. Whoever obeys his leader has also obeyed me, and whoever disobeys his leader has equally disobeyed me. (*Bukhārī*: 7137).

Ibn 'Umar (رضي الله عنهما) also narrated that the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said,

(على المرء المسلم السمع والطاعة فيما أحب وكره إلا أن يؤمر بمعصية، فإذا أمر بمعصية فلا سمع ولا طاعة).

A Muslim must listen to, and obey [his leader] concerning what he likes or dislikes, except when he is ordered to commit a sin; listening to, and obeying [the leader] is, then, not binding. (*Bukhārī*: 7144).

The *Sunnah* of the Prophet (ﷺ) says that any counsel that is meant for a leader or ruler must be offered in secret, and free from provocation and exaggeration. This has been pointed out in a *ḥadīth* reported by Ibn Abi 'Āṣim and others, on the authority of 'Iyāḍ bin Ganm (ﷻ) who quoted the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) as saying,

(من أراد أن ينصح لذي سلطان فلا يبده علانية، وليأخذ بيده فإن سمع منه فذاك، وإلاَّ أدّى الذي عليه).

Whoever wants to advise anyone who is in authority should not do that in public. Rather, he should hold his hand [i.e. get so close physically near to him]. So if the ruler/leader takes his advice, fine! And if he turns a deaf ear to it, then the adviser has discharged his duty. (*Ibn Abi* 'Āṣim, *al-Sunnah* vol. ii, p. 507 – with a sound chain of transmission).

These textual proofs from the Glorious Qur'ān and the *Sunnah* all command us to be obedient to our leaders and rulers in everything, save what amounts to disobedience to Allāh (ﷻ). We can also summarise the imports of those proofs as follows:

1- At any rate, a Muslim must hear and obey his leader/ruler, in as much as he has not been commanded to commit a sin.

2- We should never rebel against a ruler on the grounds of his refusal to heed our advice.

3- Anyone who counsels the rulers and forbids them to do wrong things, in a legal way, has rid himself of any guilt.

4- Provocation of unrest and the motives for such a provocation are all forbidden.

5- We should never rise or rebel against a Muslim ruler, unless we have conspicuous and concrete proof of his acts of disbelief.

6- It is obligatory to remain constantly with that Muslim community who follow the guidance of the Qur'ān and *Sunnah* in their speech, acts and belief. We must also love and support them, tread in their steps and be keen to see them united on the truth. Moreover, we must neither desert them nor dissociate ourselves from them. Allāh (ﷻ) says,

﴿ وَمَن يُشَاقِقِ ٱلرَّسُولَ مِنۢ بَعْدِ مَا تَبَيَّنَ لَهُ ٱلْهُدَىٰ وَيَتَّبِعْ غَيْرَ سَبِيلِ ٱلْمُؤْمِنِينَ نُوَلِّهِۦ مَا تَوَلَّىٰ وَنُصْلِهِۦ جَهَنَّمَ ۖ وَسَآءَتْ مَصِيرًا ﴾.

And whoever opposes the Messenger, after guidance has become clear to him, and follows other than the way of the believers, We shall keep him in the path he has chosen and burn him in Hell; what an evil destination! (al-Nisā': 115).

The Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) also said,

(عليكم بالجماعة فإن يد الله مع الجماعة، ومن شذ شذ في النار).

Always seek the company of the *Jamā'ah* [i.e. the Muslim group that sticks to the guidance of both the Qur'ān and the *Sunnah*]; the Hand of Allāh is with the *Jamā'ah*. And whoever isolates himself will also be isolated in the Fire. (*Sunan Tirmidhi:* 2167; *Ibn Abi 'Āṣim, al-Sunnah:* 80).

According to Ibn 'Abbās (رضي الله عنهما), Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) also warned that,

(من رأى من أميره شيئاً يكرهه فليصبر، فإنه من فارق الجماعة شبراً فمات فميتته جاهلية).

Whoever notices something that he dislikes done by his ruler –he should be patient; for whoever separates himself from the company of the *Jamā'ah* [i.e. the orthodox Muslim community] even for a span, and then dies– his death is [as bad as that of] those who died in the pre-Islamic era of ignorance[1]. (*Bukhāri*: 7143).

All of the aforementioned texts point at the necessity of remaining constantly in the company of the Muslim community, as well as refraining from contending with those who are at the helms of affairs. The texts, likewise, comprise serious threat for whoever opposes this, for unity is a blessing, while dissension is agony.

1- i.e. those who lived and died in anarchy without any divine or constituted authority to reckon with. Cf. Al-Nawawi, *Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, vol. xii, p. 238; Ibn Ḥajar, *Fatḥu al-Bari*, vol. xiii p. 7. (Translator)

Chapter Five: Holding Fast to the Book of Allāh and the *Sunnah*, and the Proofs of its Obligation:

5.1 The meaning of holding fast to the Qur'ān and the *Sunnah* and proofs of its obligation.

5.2 Warning against innovation in religion (*Bid'ah*).

5.3 Exposing the ugly face of separation and discord.

5.1 The meaning of holding fast to the Qur'ān and *Sunnah* and proofs of its obligation

Allāh (ﷻ) has commanded the Muslim community to be united and harmonious on the basis of adherence to His Book and the *Sunnah* of His Prophet (ﷺ). He equally forbade disunity and explained the danger it poses to the entire Muslim nation, both in this life and in the life to come. To accomplish this, we have been directed to resort to the Book of Allāh in all fundamental and non fundamental issues, and to keep off any cause that could lead to dissension or disunity.

Therefore, the smoothest path to salvation is to hold firmly to the Book of Allāh (ﷻ) and the *Sunnah* of His Prophet (ﷺ); they are well-fortified and durable stronghold, for whomever Allāh (ﷻ) may grant success. Allāh (ﷻ) says,

﴿ وَٱعْتَصِمُوا۟ بِحَبْلِ ٱللَّهِ جَمِيعًا وَلَا تَفَرَّقُوا۟ ۚ وَٱذْكُرُوا۟ نِعْمَتَ ٱللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ إِذْ كُنتُمْ أَعْدَآءً فَأَلَّفَ بَيْنَ قُلُوبِكُمْ فَأَصْبَحْتُم بِنِعْمَتِهِۦٓ إِخْوَٰنًا وَكُنتُمْ عَلَىٰ شَفَا حُفْرَةٍ مِّنَ ٱلنَّارِ فَأَنقَذَكُم مِّنْهَا ۗ كَذَٰلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ ٱللَّهُ لَكُمْ ءَايَٰتِهِۦ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَهْتَدُونَ ﴾

And hold firmly, all of you, to the rope of Allāh and be not divided. And remember the favour of Allāh upon you, when you were enemies (to one another) but He brought your hearts together and you became, by His Favour, brothers. And you were on the edge of a pit of the Fire, and He saved you from it. Thus, Allāh makes clear to you His *ayahs* (verses, signs, etc.) that you may be guided. (Āl- 'Imrān: 103).

Thus, Allāh (ﷻ) has ordered that His rope be held fast. The term 'rope of Allāh', as explained by scholars of Qur'ānic exegesis,

means either His covenant or the Glorious Qur'ān itself. The covenant of Allāh, which is binding on all Muslims refers to adherence to His Glorious Book and the *Sunnah* of His Prophet (ﷺ). Allāh has made it compulsory that we unite, and declared discord and dissension unlawful. He says further,

﴿ وَمَآ ءَاتَىٰكُمُ ٱلرَّسُولُ فَخُذُوهُ وَمَا نَهَىٰكُمْ عَنْهُ فَٱنتَهُوا۟ ﴾.

And whatever the Messenger has given you, take it; and whatever he has forbidden you, refrain [from it]. (al-Ḥashr: 7).

The injunction here is all-inclusive, covering both fundamental and non-fundamental aspects of religion, whether explicit or implicit. Whatever the Messenger has brought becomes a rule, by which people must abide and should not oppose. Furthermore, a statement by the Messenger regarding any rule is exactly as a statement by Allāh (ﷻ) on the same subject; hence, no one is allowed, under any excuse, to neglect such a statement. Equally, it is impermissible to give preference to a saying of any created being over that of the Messenger. Allāh (ﷻ) says,

﴿ يَـٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوٓا۟ أَطِيعُوا۟ ٱللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُۥ وَلَا تَوَلَّوْا۟ عَنْهُ وَأَنتُمْ تَسْمَعُونَ ﴾.

O you who believe, obey Allāh and His Messenger, and do not turn away from him while you are hearing. (al-Anfāl: 20).

In this way, Allāh instructed His believing servants to be obedient to Him and His Messenger. He also warned them not to oppose the Messenger or imitate the infidels who stubbornly resist his mission. For this reason Allāh said, as in the above quoted verse, "**And do not**

turn away from him". That is, by being disobedient to him, defying his order, or ignoring his warning.

Allāh (ﷻ) has also said,

﴿ يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوٓاْ أَطِيعُواْ ٱللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُواْ ٱلرَّسُولَ وَأُوْلِي ٱلۡأَمۡرِ مِنكُمۡۖ فَإِن تَنَٰزَعۡتُمۡ فِي شَيۡءٖ فَرُدُّوهُ إِلَى ٱللَّهِ وَٱلرَّسُولِ إِن كُنتُمۡ تُؤۡمِنُونَ بِٱللَّهِ وَٱلۡيَوۡمِ ٱلۡأٓخِرِۚ ذَٰلِكَ خَيۡرٞ وَأَحۡسَنُ تَأۡوِيلًا ﴾.

O you who believe! Obey Allāh, obey the Messenger, and [obey] those in authority among you. And if you disagree over anything, refer it to Allāh and the Messenger, if you do believe in Allāh and the Last Day. That is the best [way] and the best in result. (al-Nisā': 59).

Al-Ḥāfiz Ibn Kathīr said in his commentary on the above verse, "[The phrase] **'Obey Allāh'** means 'follow His Book', while **'Obey the Messenger'** indicates compliance with his *Sunnah*. The expression **'[obey] those in authority among you'** means when they command you to perform an act of obedience to Allāh, but not of disobedience; no created being should be obeyed at the expense of compliance with Allāh's injunctions".

Commenting on the saying of Allāh (ﷻ), **"And if you disagree over anything, refer it to Allāh and the Messenger**[1]**"**. Mujāhid, the notable Muslim scholar, said, "That means: refer it to the Book of Allāh and the *Sunnah* of His Messenger". This is an order from Allāh (ﷻ) that all matters of dispute among people, relating to either fundamental or non-fundamental issues, must be resolved through the Glorious Qur'ān and the *Sunnah*. Allāh says as well,

1- Al-Nisā': 59.

﴿ وَمَا ٱخۡتَلَفۡتُمۡ فِيهِ مِن شَيۡءٖ فَحُكۡمُهُۥٓ إِلَى ٱللَّهِۚ ﴾

And in anything over which you disagree, the decision thereof is with Allāh. (al-Shūrā: 10).

Hence, the Qur'ānic and the Suunah's ruling or testimony in favour of anything must be the truth; and apart from the truth what else can be there save error! In view of this, Allāh (ﷻ) said, as quoted above, **"If you do believe in Allāh and the Last Day".** That is to say, resolve your disputes and unfamiliarity through the Qur'ān and the *Sunnah,* and whoever fails to do so is neither a believer in Allāh nor in the Last Day. **"That is the best",** this clause explains that resorting to the Book of Allāh and the *Sunnah* of His Messenger in controversial matters is the best approach, and **"the best in result":** that is, in the outcome and end result, as explained by al-Suddi, or, in the opinion of another scholar, Mujāhid, with respect to the reward ensuing from that. This latter viewpoint is close to the context[1]. There are still many more verses in the Glorious Qur'ān concerning the necessity of holding fast to the Book of Allāh and the *Sunnah* of His Prophet (ﷺ), and resorting to both in all matters.

Proofs of this (holding firmly to the Qur'ān and the *Sunnah*) in the *ḥadīth* include a narration by Abū Hurairah (ﷺ), as reported by Muslim, that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said,

1- Ibn Kathīr, *al-Tafsir* vol. ii, p. 304.

(إن الله يرضى لكم ثلاثاً ويسخط لكم ثلاثاً، يرضى لكم أن تعبدوه ولا تشركوا به شيئاً وأن تعتصموا بحبل الله جميعاً ولا تفرقوا، وأن تناصحوا من ولاه الله أمركم. ويسخط لكم ثلاثاً، قيل وقال، وكثرة السؤال، وإضاعة المال).

Indeed, Allāh likes for you three things, and hates to see you doing some other three things. He likes to see you worshipping Him alone without associating partners with Him. He is also pleased to see you holding firmly, all of you, to His rope and not be divided, and to see you advising whomever He has put at the helms of your affairs. On the other hand, He disapproves for you idle talk, too much inquisition and wasting of [your] wealth. (*Muslim*: 1715).

In another *ḥadīth,* Jābir (ﷺ) narrated that the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said,

(إني تارك فيكم ما إن تمسكتم به لن تضلوا بعدي كتاب الله وسنتي).

I am going to leave behind for you what if you hold on to, you will never go astray, after me: the Book of Allāh and my *Sunnah.* (Reported by Imam Mālik in *al-Muwaṭṭa'* vol. ii, p. 899).

The Prophet (ﷺ) said further in another *ḥadīth,*

(تركتكم على البيضاء ليلها كنهارها لا يزيغ عنها بعد إلا هالك).

I have left you on a white (plain course) whose night is [as clear] as its daytime. None but he who will perish shall defect from it. (*Sunan Ibn Mājah* vol. i, p. 16 -Preface-[1]).

Also, the *ḥadīth* of al-'Irbāḍ bin Sāriyah mentioned earlier has it that the Prophet (ﷺ) said,

1- See also *al-Albāni, Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Mājah* vol. i, p. 6.

(عليكم بسنتي وسنة الخلفاء الراشدين المهديين من بعدي تمسكوا بها وعضوا عليها بالنواجذ).

Follow my *Sunnah* (my way) and that of the Rightly Guided Caliphs [who shall reign] after me. Hold on to them and stick firmly to them. (*Sunan Abū Dawūd* vol. v, p. 13; *Sunan Tirmidhi* –with *Tuḥfah al-aḥwadhi*- vol. vii, p. 438).

In addition, the Prophet (ﷺ) has given those of his followers who adhere to his *Sunnah* the glad tidings of entering Paradise. And this, to every believer –no matter how meagre the level of his/her Faith– represents the ever best good news, and the most coveted goal. The glad tidings came in the body of a *ḥadīth* narrated by Abū Hurairah (ؓ), who quoted the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) as saying,

(كل أمتي يدخلون الجنة إلا من أبى. قالوا ومن يأبى يا رسول الله؟ قال: من أطاعني دخل الجنة ومن عصاني فقد أبى).

All my followers will enter Paradise, except those who refuse. They (the audience) said, O Messenger of Allāh, who will [dare] refuse [to enter Paradise?] He said, **Whoever obeys me will enter Paradise, and whoever disobeys me has refused [to be admitted into Paradise].** (*Bukhāri*: 7280).

What form of refusal of the *Sunnah* of the Prophet (ﷺ) could be more momentous than ignoring his order through inventing hreresy in religion?

Assuredly, the Muslim group, usually referred to as the *Jamā'ah*, that will be saved from Allāh's punishment are those who tread in the path of the Prophet (ﷺ) and his Companions. Ubayy bin

Ka'b (ﷺ) said, "Stick to the way and *Sunnah* [of the Prophet (ﷺ)], for none of those on the way and *Sunnah* [of the Prophet (ﷺ)] –who, remembering [Allāh] the Most Gracious, sheds tears profusely out of his fear of Him– shall be touched by the Fire; never, this will not happen. Indeed, it is better to be thrifty in one's practice of the *Sunnah* and following the way [of the Prophet (ﷺ)] than to engage laboriously in practices that are contrary to the way and *Sunnah* [of the Prophet (ﷺ)]".

5.2 Warning against innovation in religion (*Bid'ah*):

5.2.1 What is '*Bid'ah*'?

'*Bid'ah*' is an Arabic word meaning, literally, an unprecedented invention. Hence, a derivative of the word appears in the saying of Allāh (ﷻ) that,

﴿ بَدِيعُ ٱلسَّمَٰوَٰتِ وَٱلْأَرْضِ ﴾.

[Allāh is] the *Badī'u* [i.e. Originator] of the heavens and the earth. (al-Baqarah: 117).

However, in the technical sense of the Islamic law (Sharia), '*Bid'ah*' is any newly invented creed or act of worship in contrast either to the Qur'ān and the *Sunnah*, or to the consensus of the worthy predecessors of the Muslim nation.

5.2.2 The danger of '*Bid'ah*':

Innovations or inventions in religion pose grave danger, and have negative impacts, not only on individuals and the community, but also on the religion itself.

Such innovations (referred to in Arabic as *Bid'ah*) are utterly invention of new things in religion, introducing a saying in Allāh's name without any true knowledge of such, and adding to the religion something that has never been authorised by Allāh.

Innovation in religion may constitute grounds for rejection of one's acts of worship, as it also leads to discord among the Muslims. An innovator, in this respect, would bear the burden of his act in addition to that of whoever might have followed him in doing what he invented.

Furthermore, innovation in religion will be a major reason for denying an innovator access to the cistern of the Prophet (ﷺ) in the Hereafter. Sahl bin Sa'd al-Anṣāri and Abū Sa'īd al-Khudri (رضي الله عنهما) both narrated that the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said,

(أنا فَرَطُكم على الحوض، من مرّ عليّ شرب ومن شرب لا يظمأ أبداً، ليردن عليَّ أقوام أعرفهم ويعرفونني ثم يحال بيني وبينهم فأقول إنهم من أمتي، فيقال: إنك لا تدري ما أحدثوا بعدك. فأقول: سحقاً لمن غيّر بعدي).

I am your predecessor (forerunner) at the Ḥawḍ (the heavenly cistern). Whoever passes by me [there] shall drink [from it], and whoever drinks [from it] shall never be thirsty again. Surely, there will come to me people who I will recognise and they too will recognise me, but a barrier will be placed between us. Then, I will say, "They are of my followers". It will be said to me, "You do not know what they invented in religion after you had left". Then, I will say, "Far removed [should be] who changed [the religion] after me". (*Bukhāri*: 6583, 6584; *Muslim*: 2290).

Moreover, innovation of this kind is a disgrace to religion and distortion of its landmarks. To sum up, innovation in religion poses a serious threat to the religious as well as worldly issues of concern to all Muslims.

Anyone who reflects on the content of the Glorious Qur'ān and the *Sunnah*, will discover that innovation in religion is generally prohibited and undesirable. This covers all types of innovation in religion, even though the gravity of prohibition varies according to the nature of any given innovation itself.

It is also not a secret that innovation in religion has been downrightly condemned as a single entity in the following *ḥadīths* of the Prophet (ﷺ):

(إياكم ومحدثات الأمور، فإن كل محدثة بدعة وكل بدعة ضلالة).

Beware of matters of recent invention [i.e. in religion]; for such inventions are innovation, and every innovation [in religion] is aberration. (*Musnad Aḥmad, vol. i, p. 435; Sunan Dārimi vol.* i, p. 78; *al-Mustadrak* vol. ii, p. 318[(1)]).

(من أحدث في أمرنا هذا ما ليس منه فهو رد).

Whoever introduces in this matter of ours [i.e. Islam] something alien to it, such an innovation is bound to be rejected. (*Bukhāri*: 2697; *Muslim*: 1718).

The two *ḥadīths* pointed out that every invention, with respect to religion, is an innovation, while every innovation is an aberration, bound for rejection. The import thereby is that innovation in acts of worship or belief is prohibited. The prohibition is, however, of uneven degrees, depending on the nature or gravity of the committed innovation. Thus, some innovations are sheer infidelity. Such as circumambulation of tombs with the aim of endearing oneself to the dead, offering sacrifices and vows to them, as well as supplicating to, or calling on the dead persons for help.

1- Al-Ḥākim scored the chain of transmission for this *ḥadīth* as 'sound', and al-Dhahabi also consented to this.

Some forms of innovation may be means of Polytheism (*Shirk*). Examples of this include building [a mosque for instance] on graves, as well as performance of prayer (*Ṣalāh*) or making supplication (*du'ā'*) at graveyards. Some other forms of innovation amount only to disobedience to Allāh and wrongdoing, such as when a person celebrates festivals that are not mentioned or recommended in the Islamic texts, or engages in invented invocations, or chooses to live in celibacy, or decides to fast in a standing position and under the heat of the sun.

5.2.3 Causes of innovation in religion

The causes are many, but the most prominent one is staying far from the guidance of the Qur'ān, the *Sunnah* and the way of the worthy predecessors. This self-imposed banishment from what we have mentioned culminates in ignorance of the sources of legislation in Islam.

Other factors that could lead to an outbreak of innovation in religion include:

- Being fond of fallacious argument.
- Reliance on mere human intelligence and evil comrades.
- Dependence on weak or fabricated *ḥadīths,* which the innovators normally use to buttress their stance.
- Imitating the disbelievers.
- Copying the attitudes of those who have gone astray.

5.3 Exposing the ugly face of separation and discord

5.3.1 Proofs

Allāh (ﷻ) has condemned disunity and proscribed whatever means or cause that could lead to it. Many texts from both the Qur'ān and the *Sunnah* similarly warned against separation or dissension. Those texts further clarified the evil consequences of dissension and labelled it as a major cause of disappointment in this life, and of humiliation, punishment, and darkening the face in the hereafter. Allāh (ﷻ) says,

﴿ وَلَا تَكُونُوا۟ كَٱلَّذِينَ تَفَرَّقُوا۟ وَٱخْتَلَفُوا۟ مِنۢ بَعْدِ مَا جَآءَهُمُ ٱلْبَيِّنَـٰتُ ۚ وَأُو۟لَـٰٓئِكَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ ﴿١٠٥﴾ يَوْمَ تَبْيَضُّ وُجُوهٌ وَتَسْوَدُّ وُجُوهٌ ۚ فَأَمَّا ٱلَّذِينَ ٱسْوَدَّتْ وُجُوهُهُمْ أَكَفَرْتُم بَعْدَ إِيمَـٰنِكُمْ فَذُوقُوا۟ ٱلْعَذَابَ بِمَا كُنتُمْ تَكْفُرُونَ ﴿١٠٦﴾ وَأَمَّا ٱلَّذِينَ ٱبْيَضَّتْ وُجُوهُهُمْ فَفِى رَحْمَةِ ٱللَّهِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَـٰلِدُونَ ﴾.

And do not be like those who became divided and differed after the clear proofs had come to them. For them there is awful punishment. On the Day [some] faces will turn white and [some] faces will turn black. As for those whose faces turn black, [to them it will be said], "Did you reject Faith after accepting it? Taste then the punishment for what you used to reject". But as for those whose faces turn white, [they will be] within the Mercy of Allāh [i.e. Paradise]. They will abide therein eternally. (Āl-'Imrān: 105-107).

Ibn 'Ābbās said, "The faces of the *Ahl al–Sunnah* (Followers of the *Sunnah* or the Orthodox Sunni Muslims) will turn white, while the faces of the innovators and those who became divided will turn black".

Also, Allāh (ﷻ) said in another chapter of the Glorious Qur'ān,

﴿إِنَّ ٱلَّذِينَ فَرَّقُوا۟ دِينَهُمْ وَكَانُوا۟ شِيَعًا لَّسْتَ مِنْهُمْ فِى شَىْءٍ ۚ إِنَّمَآ أَمْرُهُمْ إِلَى ٱللَّهِ ثُمَّ يُنَبِّئُهُم بِمَا كَانُوا۟ يَفْعَلُونَ﴾.

Indeed, those who have divided their religion and become sects, you [i.e. Muḥammad ﷺ] are not associated with them in the least. Their affair is left only to Allāh. He will then tell them what they used to do. (al-An'ām: 159).

The above texts prove the dispraising of discord, and highlight the danger inherent therein, whether in this life or in the life to come. They further illustrate how dissension was responsible for the doom suffered by the People of the Book (the Jews and the Christians), and how it has been the root cause of every deviation from the right path experienced so far by the human race.

Condemnation of discord and dissension, as well as urging people to be united and harmonious are also reported in a number of *ḥadīths*. In one of those *ḥadīths*, according to both Imam Aḥmad and Abu Dawūd, Mu'āwiyah (رضي الله عنه) stood up and said, "O [you people], the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) stood up among us and said,

(ألا إن من قبلكم من أهل الكتاب افترقوا على اثنتين وسبعين ملة. وإن هذه الأمة ستفترق على ثلاث وسبعين ملة: اثنتان وسبعون في النار وواحدة في الجنة وهي الجماعة).

Oh, [do know that] the People of the Book who lived before you split up into seventy-two sects. This *ummah* (Muslim community or nation) will [also] split up into seventy-three sects, out of which seventy-two are Hell-bound, while only one will go to Paradise,

and that is the *Jamā'ah*[1]". (Reported in *Musnad Aḥmad,* vol. iv, p. 152; *Sunan Abu Dawūd,* vol. v p. 5 and others with a sound chain of transmission).

The Prophet (ﷺ) has thus announced that his followers will split up into seventy-three sects; all but one only shall end up in Hell. The seventy-two erring sects are, undoubtedly, those who indulge in vices, as done by other culprits who preceded them.

Although the bone of contention in the discord referred to in the above *ḥadīth* may be confined to religious issues, the disagreement may also be centred around religious, as well as worldly issues that ultimately end up as religious matters. Moreover, it is also probable that the cause be purely mundane. At any rate, differences and discord are bound to happen among members of the Muslim nation; hence, Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) warned his followers against such discord, with a view that whoever Allāh will save shall not fall victim of that.

5.3.2 Disunity and separation as a cause of the destruction that befell past nations

If we ponder over the content of both the Glorious Qur'ān and the *Sunnah*, we will find that the bygone nations were doomed on the grounds of their discord and frequent disputation, especially with respect to their Scriptures.

1- The word "*al-Jamā'ah*" here and in some other similar contexts means the truth and compliance with the *Sunnah* of the Prophet (ﷺ); no matter how large or small the number of the adherents may be. (Translator)

Having seen the peoples of Syria and Iraq taking issue with one another on matters relating to the letters of the Qur'ān, even though the Prophet (ﷺ) had forbidden such argumentation, Ḥudhaifah (ﷺ) said to 'Uthmān bin 'Affān [the Caliph] (ﷺ), "Would you put things in order [before it is too late] for this nation! So that they would not dispute about the Book, as did the nations before them"?. The imports of this statement are two:

First: Prohibition of such a dispute.

Second: Learning a lesson from what befell those who lived before us, and being cautious not to model ourselves on them. Allāh (ﷻ) says,

﴿ ذَٰلِكَ بِأَنَّ ٱللَّهَ نَزَّلَ ٱلْكِتَـٰبَ بِٱلْحَقِّ ۗ وَإِنَّ ٱلَّذِينَ ٱخْتَلَفُوا۟ فِى ٱلْكِتَـٰبِ لَفِى شِقَاقٍۭ بَعِيدٍ ﴾.

That is because Allāh has sent down the Book in truth, and those who find a cause of disagreement in the Book are, indeed, in extreme dissension. (al-Baqarah: 176).

﴿ وَمَا ٱخْتَلَفَ ٱلَّذِينَ أُوتُوا۟ ٱلْكِتَـٰبَ إِلَّا مِنۢ بَعْدِ مَا جَآءَهُمُ ٱلْعِلْمُ بَغْيًۢا بَيْنَهُمْ ۗ ﴾.

And those who were given the Scripture [Jews and Christians] differed not except out of mutual jealousy, after knowledge had come to them. (Āl-'Imrān: 19).

Another related proof from the *Sunnah* comes in the *ḥadīth* narrated by Abū Hurairah (ﷺ), that the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said,

(ذروني ما تركتكم فإنما هلك من كان قبلكم بكثرة سؤالهم واختلافهم على أنبيائهم، فإذا نهيتكم عن شيء فاجتنبوه، وإذا أمرتكم بأمر فأتوا منه ما استطعتم).

Leave me in as much as I have not ordered you [to do something or to refrain from it]; for those who lived before you were destroyed on the grounds of their excessive curiosity and their

differences with their Prophets. Therefore, if I forbid you to do something, keep away from it. And if I command you to do something, do of it as much as you can. (*Bukhārī*: 7288; *Muslim*: 1337).

The Prophet (ﷺ), as we have seen in the above *ḥadīth*, ordered his followers to desist from any act that they have not been commanded to engage in, citing as a justification for this, the doom of the past nations on account of their frequent inquisitiveness and defiance of orders of their Prophets.

5.3.3 Is it a blessing to differ?

Some people claim that dissension is itself a mercy, drawing on a fabricated *ḥadīth*, which says,

(اختلاف أمتي رحمة).

The difference [of opinion] among my followers is a mercy.

This claim is unacceptable, in view of available proofs from the Glorious Qur'ān, the *Sunnah* and intellectual reasoning. We have previously mentioned some of the Qur'ānic verses as well as the *ḥadīths* concerning the condemnation of discord and disunity, which, we believe, are sufficient for whoever may like to ponder over them. Furthermore, the Glorious Qur'ān has made it clear that disagreement and mercy are both inconsistent and irreconcilable; hence, Allāh (ﷻ) says,

﴿وَلَا يَزَالُونَ مُخْتَلِفِينَ ﴿١١٨﴾ إِلَّا مَن رَّحِمَ رَبُّكَ﴾.

But they will not cease to differ. Except whom your Lord has given Mercy. (Hūd: 118, 119).

Moreover, the *ḥadīth* which the proponents of this claim use to support their stance is absolutely false and invalid, and not even traceable to any book of the *ḥadīth* literature. Thus, the invalidity of the purported *ḥadīth* is, itself, enough to refute such a claim, let alone the irrationality of its content. No sane person would imagine that discord is mercy, knowing the dangerous consequences that usually ensue from it, such as mutual rancour, hatred and desertion, or perhaps war that often breaks out among people because of their disagreement, even on minor issues.

5.3.4 How to get rid of separation and dissension:

The rightly guided group of Muslims (*Jamā'ah*) are the salvaged party and the victorious group. To speak of their identity, they are those who strictly follow the way of the Prophet (ﷺ) and his companions, and never do they defect from the way or turn aside from it. Al-Shāṭibi, a celebrated Muslim scholar, said in his book '*al-I'tiṣām*'[1], "The *Jamā'ah* (i.e. the way of the Orthodox Sunni Muslims) represents the practices of the Prophet (ﷺ), his Companions and their faithful followers". The path to salvation is therefore, following the way of the *Ahl al–Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah* (Followers of the *Sunnah* or the Orthodox Sunni Muslims) in speech, actions and belief, and refraining from being an antagonist or dissident to them. Allāh (ﷻ) has said,

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1- Meaning: Holding Fast to the Book of Allāh as well as the *Sunnah* of His Prophet (ﷺ). (Translator)

﴿وَمَن يُشَاقِقِ ٱلرَّسُولَ مِنۢ بَعۡدِ مَا تَبَيَّنَ لَهُ ٱلۡهُدَىٰ وَيَتَّبِعۡ غَيۡرَ سَبِيلِ ٱلۡمُؤۡمِنِينَ نُوَلِّهِۦ مَا تَوَلَّىٰ وَنُصۡلِهِۦ جَهَنَّمَۖ وَسَآءَتۡ مَصِيرًا﴾.

And whoever opposes the Messenger, after guidance has become clear to him, and follows other than the way of the believers, We shall keep him in the path he has chosen and burn him in Hell. What an evil destination! (al-Nisā': 115).

﴿وَأَنَّ هَٰذَا صِرَٰطِي مُسۡتَقِيمًا فَٱتَّبِعُوهُۖ وَلَا تَتَّبِعُواْ ٱلسُّبُلَ فَتَفَرَّقَ بِكُمۡ عَن سَبِيلِهِۦۚ ذَٰلِكُمۡ وَصَّىٰكُم بِهِۦ لَعَلَّكُمۡ تَتَّقُونَ﴾.

And this is My path, leading straight; so follow it. And do not follow [other] ways, for you will be separated from His way. This He has instructed you, that you may become pious. (al-An'ām: 153).

In another *ḥadīth* reported by Tirmidhi and others, on the authority of 'Abdullah bin 'Umar (رضي الله عنهما), the Prophet (ﷺ) said,

(لا تجتمع أمتي على ضلالة –أو قال: أمة محمد على ضلالة– ويد الله على الجماعة).

My nation (*ummah*) -or perhaps he said, 'the nation of Muḥammad'- will never agree unanimously on an error, and the Hand of Allāh is [always] with the *jamā'ah*[1]. (Reported in *Sunan Tirmidhi* vol. iv, p.446 and other *ḥadīth* compilations with a sound chain of transmission).

With this, we come to a conclusion that the road to salvation and the symbol of felicity is to hold firmly to the Book of Allāh. That honourable and mighty Book, which no falsehood can come unto,

1- Cf. the meaning of the word "*Jamā'ah*" as stated above. (Translator)

neither from before it nor from behind it; it is a revelation from a Lord who is Full of wisdom and Worthy of all praise. Furthermore, to hold firmly to the authentic *Sunnah* of the Prophet (ﷺ), who would never speak from his own inclination, but exclusively through revelation revealed [to him]. The two, i.e. the Qur'ān and the *Sunnah* are the only sources for the creed and *Sharia* (law) of Islam. Any method or approach different from what we have mentioned here is a loss.

Sticking to the *Sunnah* is, therefore, the way of the believers, the road towards gaining the pleasure of the Lord of all the worlds, and the well-fortified stronghold. It is as well, the way through which Allāh protects the Muslim community against the innovations of innovators, the false claims of liars and the distortion of fanatics and those who are ignorant. It is the system that made the first generation of Muslims righteous and pious; hence, we can attain neither success nor prosperity unless we revert to the same system. Mālik bin Anas, the renowned scholar of the Abode of the *Hijrah* [i.e. the city of Madinah] said, "Nothing could set right the last generation of this *ummah,* save that which had formerly made right the earlier generation". Meanwhile, the first generation of this *ummah* were upright because of their compliance with the Book of Allāh and the *Sunnah* of His Messenger (ﷺ).

It is pertinent to state in this respect, that our compliance with the Qur'ān and the *Sunnah* has to be in accordance with the method and understanding of our worthy predecessors, for Allāh (ﷻ) has said,

﴿ وَمَن يُشَاقِقِ ٱلرَّسُولَ مِنۢ بَعْدِ مَا تَبَيَّنَ لَهُ ٱلْهُدَىٰ وَيَتَّبِعْ غَيْرَ سَبِيلِ ٱلْمُؤْمِنِينَ نُوَلِّهِۦ مَا تَوَلَّىٰ وَنُصْلِهِۦ جَهَنَّمَ ۖ وَسَآءَتْ مَصِيرًا ﴾.

And whoever opposes the Messenger, after guidance has become clear to him, and follows other than the way of the believers We shall keep him in the path he has chosen and burn him in Hell. What an evil destination! (al-Nisā': 115). Keeping to the way of the believers, that is, the Companions and those who sincerely and accurately follow them is, therefore, the path to salvation.

We invoke Allāh, the Exalted, to bestow on the Muslims the courage to abide by rules of the Book of their Lord and that of the *Sunnah* of their Prophet (ﷺ), and to follow the way of the believers. The conclusion of our supplication is to say, "Praise be to Allāh, the Lord of the worlds". May His Blessings be upon our Prophet, Muḥammad, as well as on his family and Companions.

Glossary of Arabic Words/Terms:

Aḥād: Aḥād *ḥadīths* are those reported via solitary chains of transmission.

***Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah or Ahl al-Sunnah*:** Followers of the *Sunnah*, or the Orthodox Sunni Muslims who follow, strictly, the laws of the Qur'ān and the *Sunnah*.

Al-Bait Al-Ma'mūr: The Frequented House in heaven; seventy thousand angels enter it every day, and when they have left, they never return to it.

Al-Ghaib: Unseen.

Al-Hijra: The emigration of the Prophet (ﷺ) and his followers, from Makkah to Madinah.

Al-Injīl: Allāh's revelation to Prophet 'Īsa (Jesus) (عليه السلام).

Al-Ṣaḥīḥān or Ṣaḥīḥain: The books of *Bukhāri* and *Muslim;* the most authentic compilations of the *ḥadīths*.

Al-Salaf: The Muslim's worthy predecessors, such as the Companions, the *Tābi'ūn*, etc.

Al-Tawrāh: The Torah; Allāh's revelation to Prophet Mūsa (Moses) (عليه السلام).

Al-Zabūr: The Psalms; Allāh's revelation to Prophet Dawūd (David) (عليه السلام).

Anṣār: The Helpers; the Muslim inhabitants of Madinah city at the time of the Hijrah or emigration.

Āyah: A verse of the Glorious Qur'ān.

'Aqīdah: Faith or belief.

Bid'ah: Any newly invented word or deed believed to be an act of worship without a proof backing it from either the Glorious Qur'ān or the *Sunnah*,

Ḍa'īf: A ḍa'īf *ḥadīth* is weak and unreliable.

Da'wah: Calling others to the religion of Islam.

Dawūd: David, the Prophet (عليه السلام).

Dhikr: remembering Allāh (ﷻ).

Duā': Supplication or invocation.

Fir'awn: Pharaoh.

Ḥadīth: Cf. *Sunnah.*

Ḥajj: Pilgrimage to the Sacred House of Allāh in Makkah.

Hārun: Aaron, the Prophet (عليه السلام).

Ḥasan: A *ḥasan ḥadīth* is fairly authentic.

Ibrāhīm: Abraham, the Prophet (عليه السلام).

Idrīs: Enoch, the Prophet (عليه السلام).

Ilyās: Elias, the Prophet (عليه السلام).

Īmān: Faith.

'Īsā: Jesus, the Prophet (عليه السلام).

Isḥāq: Isaac, the Prophet (عليه السلام).

Ismā'īl: Ishmael, the Prophet (عليه السلام).

Isnād or **Sanad:** The chain of transmission of any *ḥadīth.*

Isrā' and Mi'rāj: The Prophet's night journey and ascent to heaven.

***Istikhārah*:** The special supplication for seeking guidance from Allāh before making important decisions, or when one is in perplexing situations.

Jahiliyyah: The period of Arab paganism preceding the advent of Islam.

Jibrīl: Archangel Gabriel.

Jinn: a species of beings created by Allāh from fire.

Jizyah: Money payable by certain categories of the non-Muslims in a Muslim state, or under the protection of the Muslim government.

Ka'bah: The Sacred House in Makkah.

Karāmah: a miracle performed by any righteous servant of Allāh other that His Prophets and Messengers.

Kufr: Unbelief.

Kutub al-Ṣiḥaḥ: Collections of the authentic *ḥadīths*.

Maryam: Mary.

Mawqif: Literally: stopping place, station, scene etc. In some contexts, it refers precisely to the gathering of all creatures in a single place on the Day of Resurrection.

Mīkāīl: Angel Michael.

Mu'addhin: A caller who calls people to come out and pray in the mosque at the appointed time of every obligatory prayer.

Mu'min: A believer.

Mufassirūn: Scholars of Tafsīr (Commentary on the meaning of the Qur'ān).

Muhājirūn: The Emigrants; those who emigrated from Makkah to Madinah at the instance of the Prophet (ﷺ).

Mūsa: Moses, the Prophet (عليه السلام).

Musnad: (pl. Masānīd): The collections of the *ḥadīths* that are arranged not according to their contents, but, rather, according to their narrators or transmitters.

Mutawātir: A mutawātir *ḥadīth* is that which is generally acknowledged, or has been transmitted through recurring lines of dissemination, leaving no doubt thereby about its authenticity.

Nūḥ: Noah, the Prophet (عليه السلام).

Qadar: Preordainment or predestination.

Qudsi *ḥadīth*: Any *ḥadīth* narrated both in letter and spirit by the Prophet (ﷺ) from Allāh, which has been communicated to us either via a solitary chain of transmission, or through recurring lines of dissemination, but less in degree than that through which the Qur'ān has been transmitted.

Quraish: The prominent Meccan tribe to which the Prophet (ﷺ) himself belonged.

Raka'ah: A unit of the Muslim's prayer.

Riyā': Showing-off.

Ruqyah: Therapeutic treatment involving both recitation and spitting.

Saddu al-Dharī'ah: Precautionary measures.

Ṣaḥābah: The Companions of the Prophet (ﷺ).

***Ṣaḥīḥ*:** The most authentic *ḥadīths* of the Prophet (ﷺ) are usually referred to as *ṣaḥīḥ*.

Ṣalāh: The Muslims' ritual prayer.

Shafā'ah: Intercession.

Shirk: polytheism.

Ṣifāt Dhātiyyah or Dhāti Attributes: Any inherent quality of Allāh that is in no circumstances separable from Him.

Ṣifāt Fi'liyyah: The act-related attributes of Almighty Allāh.

Ṣifāt Khabariyyah or the *Khabari* Attributes: They are those of Allāh's attributes, whose confirmation or otherwise depend solely on textual evidence from either the Qur'ān or the *Sunnah*.

Ṣiyām: Fasting.

Sulaimān: Solomon, the Prophet (عليه السلام).

Sunnah: Sayings or acts of the Prophet (ﷺ).

Sūrah: A chapter of the Glorious Qur'ān.

Tābi'ūn: Those who lived immediately after the Companions and have actually met some of them.

Tafsīr: Commentary on the meaning of the Qur'ān or Qur'ānic exegesis.

Ṭahūr: Anything that is itself pure and may be used for ritual purification, such as clean water and sand.

Tashahhud: The special form of supplication, which one recites during prayer in a sitting position after every two *raka'ats*.

Ṭawāf: The ritual circumambulation of the *Ka'bah* in Makkah,

Tawḥīd al-Asmā' wa al-Ṣifāt: Believing in the oneness of Allāh regarding His names and attributes.

Tawḥīd al-Rubūbiyyah: Oneness of Lordship.

Tawḥīd al-Ulūhiyyah: Oneness of Allāh in His exclusive right to be worshipped.

Tawḥīd: Monotheism; believing in the one and only God.

Thiqat: If a narrator of the *ḥadīth* is described as "thiqat", he is reliable.

Tiwalah: A charm used in order to endear a wife to her husband and vice-versa.

Ummah: The nation of Islam, or the Muslim community.

Waliyy (Pl. awliyā'): A righteous person in the sight of Allāh, usually referred to as "saint".

Wuḍū': The Muslim's ritual ablution.

Ya'qūb: Jacob, the Prophet (عليه السلام).

Yūnus: Jonah, the Prophet (عليه السلام).

Yūsuf: Joseph, the Prophet (عليه السلام).

Zabūr: Allāh's revelation to Dawūd (David) (عليه السلام).

Zakāh: Obligatory alms.

Zakariyyā: Zachariah, the Prophet (عليه السلام).

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IN THE LIGHT OF
THE *QUR’ĀN* AND THE *SUNNAH*.**

May Allāh make it useful to all Muslims,
and grant the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques,

King ‘Abdullah bin ‘Abd al-Azīz Āl- Sa‘ūd

the best reward, for his untiring efforts to disseminate
the Noble Book of Allāh, as well as other books that are useful to
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It is Allāh who bestows success.

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كتاب
أصول الإيمان
في ضوء الكتاب والسنة

إعداد
نخبة من العلماء

ترجمه إلى اللغة الإنجليزية
د. عبد الرزاق عبد المجيد ألارو
الباحث بإدارة الشؤون العلمية في المجمع